





CAN WE DOUBT IT?

OR, THE

GENUINE HISTORY

OF

TWO FAMILIES

OF

NORWICH.

By CHARLOTTE BOURNON-MALARME,

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By MRS. VILLA-REAL GOOCH.

The punishment of the wicked, for being long delayed, is not the less severe.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE public indulgence, which I have so long and so repeatedly experienced as a writer, I am now, for the first time, to solicit as a translator. Although I was at an early period initiated in the rudiments of the French language, and a residence for several years on the continent has long since rendered it so familiar to me, that I believe I can express myself in French with as much facility and precision as in English, yet I feel how extremely difficult it is to transfuse the spirit of one language into another. With the utmost diffidence, therefore, I submit this effort to the candour of critical sagacity.

“*L'Histoire Veritable de deux Familles de Norwich*” peculiarly attracted my attention: first, as an English story, and next as the production of a female pen. Of the author, however, I know but little. She is the sister, it seems, of Monsieur Cahaïs, a French writer of some distinction, and who, a short time before the Revolution, suffered an imprisonment in the Bastille, as the suspected author of *Les Soirées d'Antoinette*, “Antoinette’s Evenings;” one of those numerous libels, which were intended, and not a little contributed, to inflame the minds of the multitude, and to add to the disgraceful treatment, and the subsequent sufferings of a queen, whom the French people enthusiastically adored, and madly sacrificed.

Our fair author, then the Countess of Malmesbury, was, for some reason, implicated, and was also in the Bastille at the same time as her brother, without either of them suspecting the other to be there.

What other events may have attended her during the Revolution, except that of being reduced from a *Comtesse* to a *Citoyenne*, I know not. Her literary effusions have been various, but the present work is deemed the most perfect and the most interesting. And what is remarkable, she assures us of the authenticity of this extraordinary history.—“Twelve years ago,” she says, “when I was at *Bath*, a friend introduced me to the son of one of the principal characters mentioned in the work, who was kind enough to favour me with every detail respecting the lives of his ancestors. He permitted me,” she adds, “after I had made the request, to render them public, on condition that I should conceal the names of the two families.”

From whatever source she derived her materials, she has made the most admirable use of them. It is not improbable that the principal circumstances may have their foundation in fact. The events, however extraordinary,

are yet within nature. The history is managed with great skill; and the denouement is very masterly.

There are characters in it so atrocious, that the author, alluding to the authenticity of her narrative, observes, "it is dreadfully painful to know that there could exist such persons." Her mind must have been so deeply impressed with her subject, as, in the contemplation of past scenes, to have forgotten the present: for what are these two or three characters, compared with the myriads of monsters hatched by the late Revolution? It would be comparing the petty cunning of the fox with the subtlety and ferocity of the hyena and the tiger.—How much is it to be lamented, that the Revolution, which a very great and enlightened statesman*, at its *commencement*, considered as a "stupendous monument of human wisdom," should have degenerated into such various systems of op-

* Mr. Fox.

pression and desolation, as to make us almost regret that which rejoiced all the world, the destruction of the Bastille!—Alas! with the despotism of the court fled the polished spirit of the French: with the death of the Queen fled the gallantry of the nation!

It has fared with *philosophy* as with *liberty*, and one knows not whether to smile with indignation, or with contempt, at the perverse application of a term, which implies all that is great and good in human nature. In the work before us, the author tells us, that the word “philosopher, in its *natural* acceptation, expresses a being who possesses neither soul nor sensibility.” This, indeed, is become its “natural acceptation” among the French, who have acted upon it systematically, and have reduced callosity to a science. Among ourselves, we have some few of this strange brood, “who possess neither soul nor sensibility;” and probably the stock would have increased, had it not received a vital stab in

the *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, from the admirable pen of Miss HAMILTON. Far different, and far more amiable, is the science we are taught, comprehending at once the wisdom and benevolence which distinguished the sages of old, and which is so beautifully appreciated by our matchless Milton :

“How charming is divine philosophy !
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical, as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.”

In the note, where the Gallican application of the word *philosopher* is mentioned, it is very happily ridiculed by the author, who is greatly superior to the revolutionary absurdities of her infatuated country.

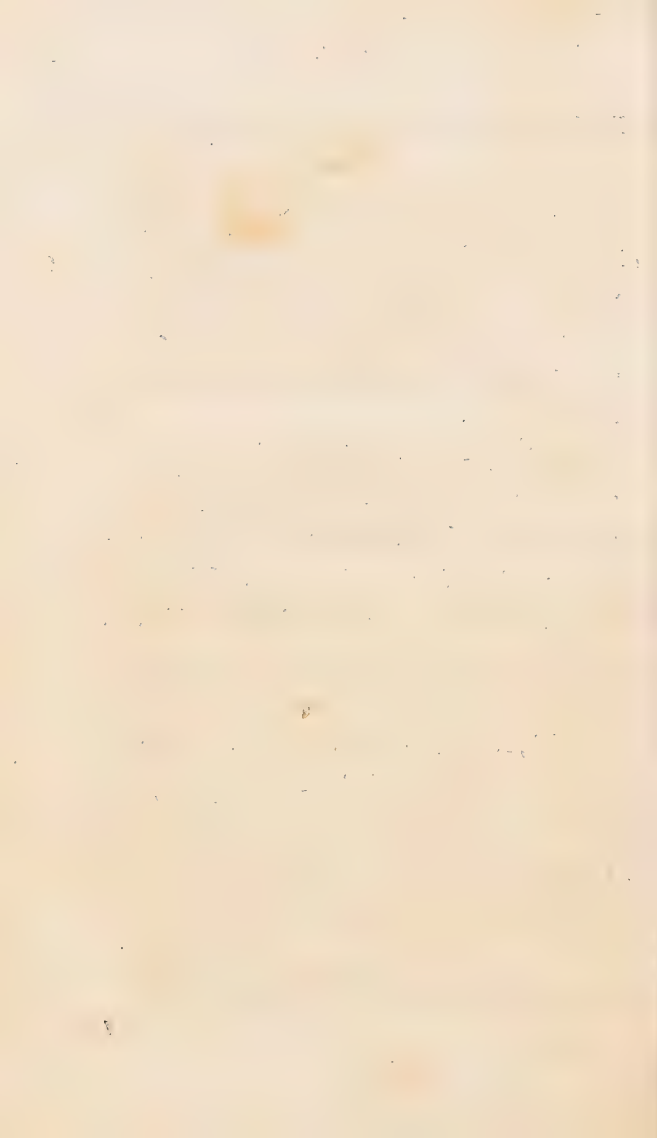
It is difficult even for all-powerful fashion to extinguish the operations of good sense and genuine feelings in a mind cultivated like that of the Countess of Malarne.

Hence, this is one of those productions which may, with pleasure, be submitted to the

English reader. No attempt is made to subvert principle. The motto expresses the moral: and the work illustrates it in the most striking manner. It necessarily involves a variety of minor morals, and the best emotions of the heart are gratified, while curiosity is strongly excited, and the imagination powerfully engaged.

In a story so interesting, and with morals so unexceptionable, I was not in the situation of many who translate some of the brilliant works of our neighbours. I had nothing to suppress, nor any thing I could wish to see altered. If my translation is not so elegant as I might have desired, it is strictly faithful; and if the reader derives from its perusal a portion of the pleasure I experienced in translating, the author will receive the eulogium she deserves, and the wishes of her translator will be gratified.





CAN WE DOUBT IT?

&c.

CHAP. I.

ON the twenty-second day of May, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, young Alfred Milborn was walking on the Gloucester road, followed by his dog, and carrying a gun upon his shoulder. He was returning home in no very pleasant humour; for, unluckily, he had not throughout the morning hit a single bird. The sound of carriages raised his attention, and excited his curiosity. Three coaches

drew near, the horses in full gallop. Alfred stepped on one side; his faithful *Lion*, thinking more about his master than the travellers, looked at him, wagging his tail, and little imagining that in the small space he occupied, he could possibly become an object of restraint. He received, however, as a punishment for his harmless imprudence, a severe cut of a whip from one of the postillions, accompanied by very ill language. This cruel and unmerited correction drew a piece of flesh from his side, and the poor animal cried out most piteously. Alfred was very fond of his dog, yet it was less out of revenge than justice that he resolved to chastise the barbarous postillion!

“Stop!” he cried, as he hastily advanced towards the carriage, “Stop, or I will instantly shoot you!”

The fear that the execution would

follow the threat, caused him to obey. At the same moment the three carriages stopped. A middled-age man let down a glass of the first, and called out in the most imperious tone, "Who is that audacious scoundrel that thus dares to interrupt me on the road?"—

"Your postillion," replied Alfred, "has just wounded my dog, without any provocation whatever. Between gentlemen there are certain rules to be observed. I expect, therefore, Sir, that you will punish the rascal who has so grossly insulted me."—

"And who are you?"

"A man."

"What, a game-keeper, I suppose, belonging to some of the nobility of this neighbourhood?"

"Your mistake, Sir, does not offend me, and I will rectify it with pleasure. My name is Alfred, and I am the eldest son of Lord Milborn."

“Of Lord Milborn!”—replied the stranger, and his exclamation was repeated by a female voice in the carriage.

“Do you know then, Sir, my father?”

“Not personally,” answered the stranger, with the utmost politeness, “but I have heard much in his praise. The perfect esteem in which he is universally held, must insure every attention towards his family. Be assured, Sir, that on my return home, I shall immediately discharge the rascal who has presumed to behave so intolerably.”

“I thank you, Sir, and will no longer intrude upon you.—Farewell, Sir, I hope we shall meet again.”

As Alfred drew back, he perceived that there were three women seated with the stranger in the first carriage. In the second were two young men, and

on the outside sat a man who had the appearance of a valet. The last carriage contained only some female attendants.

CHAP. II.

MR. POLESWORTH had enriched himself by the traffic of wool. At his death he left his only son, Gilbert, a fortune amounting to near two hundred thousand pounds. Gilbert did not, however, follow the prudent example of his father; instead of increasing, as he had done, his wealth, or at least, taking care to preserve it, Gilbert thought only upon the means of squandering it; a measure very easy to adopt, particularly in such a metropolis as London. Gilbert copied the manners of the nobility; he kept his

race-horses and his hunters, and had altogether a very magnificent stud; his house was one of the most splendid that could be procured, and his furniture in the most costly style. He gave the most brilliant entertainments, and chose a mistress, not from among the most beautiful women, but from among those the most celebrated for their extravagance.

Three years were sufficient to reduce Gilbert Polesworth to a state bordering upon poverty. He soon experienced that the friends of the rich are merely nominal: he was censured, forsaken, and despised.

Nevertheless, had he even then listened to the voice of reason, he had still the means to be happy. His father had, from a motive of gratitude, preserved a small estate in his native county, which had been bequeathed to him by a friend. He visited it once in

every three or four years, to pass a month, and never quitted it without giving proofs of his benevolence among the unfortunate who surrounded it. That place, named Fodder-Lodge, presented every thing that was useful and agreeable. The house was capable of accommodating a large family; the gardens, well laid out, produced more fruit and vegetables than could be possibly wanted by the proprietor; and the produce of the estate was above four hundred a year. It was situated only three miles from Norwich, so that he could at once enjoy the pleasures of the town and the tranquillity of the country.

Gilbert had not once shown himself at Fodder-Lodge since his father's death. His pride would have been too sensibly mortified by his appearing in that part of the world where the origin of his fortune was known. It was at Norwich that his grandfather had earned his first

shilling, by carrying bales of wool from one warehouse to another*. The cheerless situation in which Gilbert began to find himself could alone induce him to rusticate at Fodder-Lodge; but it was necessary that he should fly from persecuting creditors, and, above all, escape the danger of being arrested. He had left his town house a week, and concealed himself in a dismal garret, which one of his footmen, the only one willing to follow him, had hired.

No one knew of this property that Polesworth possessed in Norfolk. He had always cautiously avoided mentioning it, under an idea that it might reveal the poverty of his ancestors. His servant, Emanuel, persuaded him to quit London; he had therefore no other alternative, but that of retiring

* The city of Norwich is celebrated for its beautiful manufactories of cotton.

to Fodder-Lodge, and he went thither as secretly as possible.

During eighteen months that he resided there, without scarcely ever going out of his house, he had forbidden the gardener to let any person know who he was. Emanuel went to Norwich for provisions, and no one suspected that Fodder-Lodge was inhabited by its master.

One evening, when Gilbert went out to walk in his grounds, he was extremely surprised on perceiving, at the end of an avenue, two young girls, who were amusing themselves, and playing on the grass. They were equally astonished and confused by his sudden appearance; one of them began to fly towards a little gate that opened into the fields; in vain did her companion call to her, and urge her back again; she that remained, returned the bow that Gilbert made, and, in a modest manner, inquired whether

the owner of Fodder-Lodge was arrived there.

Polesworth found himself compelled to answer in the affirmative ; the young person entreated that he would forgive her that liberty, and added, that for several years, the gardener had permitted her, whenever she came near Fodder-Lodge, to walk about the grounds, but that she should certainly abstain in future from so doing. Gilbert requested that she would not discontinue a custom so favourable to himself, since it would procure him the pleasure of seeing her.

The voice of her companion from the other side of the wall, repeating the name of Lucretia, put an end to the conference. The one who was called, left Gilbert, and followed her friend.

On his return, Polesworth inquired of the gardener the names of the young people whom he had seen in his gar-

den. The man did not know how, he said, sufficiently to plead an excuse for the fault that he had committed, in leaving with Miss Lucretia Farington a key of the little gate, which, since his master's return, he had totally forgotten to ask for.

"Her family then, doubtless, lives near?"

"About two miles off, Sir, at the farthest."

"What is her father?"

"A thorough good man, Sir; humane and generous."

"Is he rich?"

"He passes for such."

"Has he several children?"

"Only Miss Lucretia."

"Why, there were two of them?"

"The other is her cousin, come to pass a few weeks at Mr. Farington's."

On the following morning, Gilbert ordered a horse to be saddled, and went

thither. He was welcomed by the husband and wife to Peace-House, with the utmost politeness, and received an invitation to return there frequently.

Gilbert Polesworth had not been without mistresses, but he had never known love. The sight of Lucretia had convinced him that he possessed a heart capable of loving to an excess. Few women indeed had it more in their power to inspire tender sentiments than Miss Farington. She formed an union of beauty, mind, amiableness, and virtue; and Gilbert became violently enamoured.

In a month afterwards, he solicited her hand of her father, confessing to him, at the same time, that he had not any other property than Fodder-Lodge. Mr. Farington replied, that interest would not have any weight with him, were his daughter happy; and that it must be therefore from herself, and not

from him, that he must endeavour to obtain her.

Gilbert, who could not be accused of superabundant modesty, was far from suspecting that he could meet with any obstacle; and, fully impressed with that idea, directly avowed his tenderness to Miss Farington, and solicited the gift of her hand. Lucretia did not keep him long in suspense.

“I am flattered, Sir,” she said, “by the honour that you would confer upon me, but it is impossible for me to accept it.”

“Impossible, young lady!----That word is cruelly decisive!—May I presume to inquire into the motive of a reply so wholly unexpected?”

“I will inform you, Sir, without difficulty. My ideas respecting marriage ought not to appear singular to liberal-minded people. I believe that it can never be rendered happy, but when it

unites two persons who are equally attached to each other; such, doubtless, is your own opinion?"

"I acknowledge it."

"Well then, Sir, I esteem you very much; but I do not feel for you those sentiments which are, I think, necessary for the chains of Hymen. Excuse my candour—"

"It does not flatter my vanity."

"You will not, surely, blame me for my conduct; in opening my heart to you, I did not mean to offend."

"Perhaps, young lady, the dislike with which I have the misfortune to inspire you, is the effect of a fatal prepossession which time may hereafter destroy; perhaps, too, a more fortunate mortal"—

"Hold Sir, I have not, I think, given you any right to question me thus far; I can, however, assure you that my heart is perfectly free. As to any dis-

like, such as you suppose, believe me, none exists. I pay every justice to your merit; it will, I doubt not, form the happiness of the woman that you marry; but that woman can never be Lucretia Farington."—She accompanied her last words with a curtsy, and left the room.

Polesworth stood confused and humiliated. A few tears, that fell as much from vexation as from love, wet the handkerchief with which he covered his eyes. Ashamed of being seen in that situation, and wishing to avoid his disappointment being noticed, he hurried out of the house, and shut himself up in his own apartment. Rage and despair had taken full possession of his faculties. "Hatred," said he within himself, as he tore the hair from his head, "has succeeded idolatry; Lucretia, you shall repent your having rejected me; revenge alone can gratify my heart."

He continued eight days without quit-

ting his apartment. Emanuel at length prevailed upon him to seek for objects of amusement and dissipation.

Norwich is a large city, in which reside many gay people. Polesworth went there, became acquainted, and six months afterwards, married Miss Julien Milton, a young person, twenty years of age. It was a match of resentment on both sides. Julien was attached to the youngest son of a nobleman; and although she was very pretty, she could not meet with the least return. The parents of both wished the union; pride on one side, and avarice on the other, became united: Julien had a fortune, and the nobleman's son was poor. Nothing, however, could influence the young man; his refusal had been peremptory, and it was then that Gilbert appeared. Rumour soon informed him of Julien's adventure; the similarity of their situations drew them together;

and, as I have already observed, resentment did the rest.

A year glided away. Gilbert passed one half of his time at Fodder-Lodge, and the other half at Norwich; there he resided with his father-in-law, a merchant, supposed to be very rich. Mr. and Mrs. Polesworth lived perfectly well together, and every one who saw them believed them to be happy. Gilbert had never appeared at Peace-House since his conversation with Miss Farington; but he had not forgotten its inhabitants, and it was not without a sensation of exquisite sorrow that he heard Miss Lucretia was going to be married to Mr. Milborn, son to the nobleman of that title. The intelligence, which was mentioned publicly in an assembly, appeared to give as much uneasiness to Mrs. Polesworth as to her husband. The cause was very obvious; for Milborn was the identical person

who had rejected her with so much disdain.

The two ladies had not met since their change of condition; they knew each other from having passed three months together at the same school. At an entertainment given by an inhabitant of Norwich, Mrs. Milborn and Mrs. Polesworth found themselves seated near each other. A bow of cool civility was, however, all that passed between them. Both ladies were in an advanced state of pregnancy. They were brought to bed nearly at the same time, and each presented her husband with a son.

Circumstances, foreign to this history, determined Mr. and Mrs. Milborn to change their place of residence. The latter, having lost both her father and mother, found that she had nothing left to regret in the country; and with

great pleasure accompanied her husband to London.

Soon after that, the father of Mrs. Polesworth was attacked by an inflammation on his lungs, of which he died. Instead, however, of the wealth which she expected to possess, she found only debts, that the property to which she succeeded was inadequate to discharge. That event obliged Gilbert to make a considerable reform in his mode of living. He had, since his marriage, fitted up his house in the most expensive manner, supposing his father-in-law to be extremely opulent; an opinion generally received at Norwich. Polesworth had himself entered into a variety of engagements, which were to be fulfilled out of the inheritance that he expected. It was now become necessary to honour them. Fodder-Lodge was sold; and the family left the coun-

ty of Norfolk, to reside, it was reported, in one of the most retired parts of Wales.

By the death of Lord Milborn's eldest son, which shortly preceded that of his father, Lucretia's husband became sole heir to the title and property of his house; her family was augmented by a son, in addition to the eldest, and two girls.

Tired of the dissipation of the capital, Lord and Lady Milborn went to settle on their principal estate; and had resided at Milborn-Hall ten years, when their eldest son met with the adventure recorded in the first chapter.

CHAP. III.

THE young sportsman, before-mentioned, was one of those finely-finished beings, whom nature takes pleasure to create. The brilliant education he had received, had rendered him perfect, both as to mind and person. He possessed humanity, sensibility, and generosity; and if, in the ebullitions of a disposition, perhaps, too ardent, he sometimes committed trivial offences, his heart, naturally good, impelled him to repair them immediately.

Godwin, his youngest brother, was far from resembling him, either in manners or in sentiments. He was not in-

clined to do wrong; yet, if it was difficult to discover in him any vices, it was still more so to perceive that he had any virtues.

Miss Ancelina, the eldest daughter, was of middling stature; elegant, well-formed, and of easy address. Her countenance was interesting; and, without being a decided beauty, she was fully capable of pleasing, and she did so. Mild, polite, and attentive; a respectful daughter, and a steady friend. Such was Ancelina Milborn.

Harriot, her sister, younger than herself by eighteen months, was of *her* sex, what Alfred was of *his*. To the finest form she united all the lesser graces; for never was a woman of fair complexion more regularly beautiful; and what added to her charms, was, that they were the index of the most amiable mental qualifications. Her

figure, modelled by the graces, was the repository of a pure mind; and happy must be the parents, who can trace among their children, a resemblance of Harriot Milborn!

CHAP. IV.

SUMPTUOUS CASTLE, a superb seat, of extensive domain, situate six miles from Milborn Hall, after having been upon sale for two years, became purchased by a rich inhabitant of India, lately arrived in England. He was coming with his family to take possession of it, when Alfred, who was on the road, laid a sort of foundation for an intercourse between the two houses. That belonging to Lord Milborn is already partly known to the reader; I must now give him some idea of the nabob's.

Mr. Growell was, at the time I am speaking, between forty-five and fifty

years of age. His person was fine, and his manners bore every appearance of candour and benevolence. Mrs. Growell, who was four or five years younger, was no longer a pretty woman, yet it was easy to perceive that she had been one in her youth; but her countenance was less open than that of her husband.

Evan, their eldest son, did not bear the slightest resemblance to any of his family. His gigantic stature, which was void of either grace or ease, gave him more the appearance of a chairman than of a gentleman. His hair, which was bordering upon fiery red, gave to his naturally-harsh features a look of terrifying ferocity; and his disposition had too much analogy with his appearance.

Gideon, his youngest brother, was a composition of every thing amiable. The most studied eulogium could give

but a feeble idea of the rare merit of Gideon Growell: he was, in a word, all that can be conceived to be most perfect in man.

Clara Growell, the eldest daughter, was gentle and pretty; the equanimity of her temper made her beloved, even by the terrible Evan. She was, however, of the most decided turn of mind; nothing could ever induce her to submit, whenever she thought herself in the right.

Aurea, the youngest, having come into the world before the time prescribed by nature, her health was so delicate as to influence her mind, and, in fact, reduced her to the state of a creature that seemed to possess a mere existence.

The elder of the eight young people, of whom I have given outlines, did not exceed twenty-one, and the younger were about fifteen or sixteen.

CHAP. V.

MR. and Mrs. Growell, delighted to find themselves such near neighbours to Lord Milborn, hastened to pay him a visit; and, in order to dispose in their favour persons with whom they wished to cultivate an intimacy, they had, on their arrival at Sumptuous Castle, discharged Roger, the postillion, who had given Alfred so much cause of complaint.

On the day appointed for visiting Milborn Hall, orders were given for the most elegant of their carriages to be in readiness, which was drawn by six very beautiful horses; and in which went Mr.

and Mrs. Growell, their eldest son, and Clara, all four adorned with whatever Asiatic luxury could procure. When they stepped into the coach, two out-riders preceded them, and announced their arrival.

Lord Milborn presented himself in the hall, to receive his brilliant visitors, and was accompanied by Alfred. All the common forms of civility passed; and Mr. Growell, addressing himself to Alfred, assured him that the rascal, who had presumed to hurt his dog, was no longer in his service. Young Milborn made a bow of acknowledgment, and they entered the drawing-room.

Lady Milborn was at work, and so were her two daughters, and Godwin was employed in reading to them. The visit was extremely ceremonious on the part of the Growells, and equally amiable and affable on that of the Milborns. They promised mutually, how-

ever, to meet frequently. I know not whether his Lordship had any intention to keep his word, but I am convinced that he spoke at the moment with much coldness in his manner. Young people are led naturally to rejoice in every thing which promises to add to their amusements. The vicinity to a man who was immensely rich, which seemed to insure balls and variety of entertainments, could not be otherwise than agreeable to young people.

As soon as the strangers were withdrawn, they gave their opinion upon each individual. Godwin and Ancelina were rapturous in their praises. Alfred and Harriot were not exactly of the same opinion. Mr. and Mrs. Growell, they observed, were, doubtless, very civil people; but wanted that polish of high life to which they had been accustomed in their parents and acquaintance. Alfred, above all, had not forgotten the

haughty interrogation put to him on the high road.

Lord and Lady Milborn listened to the conversation of their children without making a single remark: but smiled at each other, when Alfred passed his slight censure. As soon as they were alone, they made mutual inquiries respecting their new acquaintance.

“Perhaps, my dear, I am wrong,” said Lucretia to her husband, “but I have taken a sort of dislike to Mr. and Mrs. Growell, that I never before experienced for any one.”

“It is a fault, my love, in which I participate, and which each of us should expiate, by acknowledging, as well as we are able, the advances they have made us. The unfavourable impression they have created, not being founded upon any reasonable ground, we should be doubly guilty if we did not endeavour to overcome it.”

"I think so, too; but shall we succeed?"

"Keep up, at least, appearances; and let us conceal from our children that defect in our own characters."

"How do you like Miss Growell?" said Godwin to his brother, as soon as Lord and Lady Milborn left the room.

"I think her very plain."

"Oh, Alfred!" replied Ancelina, "what a cold observation upon one of the most pleasing girls that I ever beheld!"

"You are very indulgent, Ancelina."

"She does not even do her justice," said Godwin; "she should have added, one of the most beautiful."

Harriot smiled, and Alfred shrugged up his shoulders.

"Name, then, a woman who can dispute with her the prize of beauty."

“ Oh, sisters!”—exclaimed Alfred, with vivacity.

“ Your attachment to us, my dear brother,” said Harriot, “ renders you blind to our faults; and I am sure that Ancelina will not be angry, when I say that Miss Growell is very superior both to her, and to myself.”

“ That is very true,” replied Godwin.

“ You are more sincere than polite,” said Ancelina.

“ He is neither the one nor the other,” cried Alfred, peevishly.

“ Pray put an end to this ridiculous contention; ought my brothers to quarrel because they are of different opinions?”

“ Harriot is in the right,” replied Ancelina; “ so come, young men, do cease teasing us with this nonsense.”

She went up to Alfred, and kissed him, which he returned from his heart.

She then approached Godwin, and held out her hand:—"I freely forgive you," said she, smiling, "for having depreciated my beauty."

Godwin made no reply, but hastily left the room.

"He is angry," said she mournfully, "and I am chagrined to see him so incapable of the least contradiction."

"Therefore," said Harriot, "why not agree to what is the fact, that Miss Growell is a charming girl?"

"I am vexed," said Alfred, "whenever I perceive that justice is not done to my Harriot and to my Ancelina."

"Can you expect that the eyes of every one should be as partial as your own?"

"His judgment is the mere result of prepossession."

"And is yours, Alfred, perfectly exempt from it?"

"Let us say no more upon the sub-

ject; but take up that of the interesting book* that Godwin was reading to us when our neighbours arrived."

Here ended the conversation relative to the rich nabob and his family.

* It was one of the publications of Miss Burney, now Madame d'Arblay.

CHAP. VI.

ON their return from the visit to Milborn Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Growell retired to a small chamber, or sitting-room, of which the most laboured magnificence composed every article. They shut themselves up in it, and forbade all interruption.

Evan and Clara were now joined by Gideon and Aurea, who asked them a multitude of questions respecting the inhabitants of Milborn Hall. Evan only answered that he should have been heartily tired, if it had not been for Miss Harriot, the youngest of Lord Milborn's daughters.

"She is then very amiable," said Gideon.

"Extremely so!" replied Clara.

"Has my Lord any more children?" asked young Aurea.

"There are four; and, like ourselves, two daughters and two sons."

"Describe them all to me," replied Aurea, addressing herself to her brother.

Evan shook his head, began whistling, and went out of the room.

"How provokingly uncivil my brother is!" continued Aurea: "have more kindness, sister, and tell me what you think of the Milborn family."

"Lord and Lady Milborn seem to be most respectable people. Their eldest son, Alfred, is a very fine young man, and extremely polite; it was him whom we met upon the road, on our coming here. His brother is not so handsome; he has, however, his qualifications, and

would please *me* more than the other."

"And the girls," said Gideon, "are they pretty?"

"The eldest, called Ancelina, is very charming; but she is not nearly so beautiful as her younger sister, whom I heard them call Harriot. They are both highly educated, and I think their society cannot fail of being a great acquisition to us."

The appearance of Mrs. Growell, who entered the room, put an end to the conversation.

My quality of historian enabling me to read the hearts of my personages, it is a duty incumbent upon me to initiate the reader into some of the secrets of the two families.

The stern Evan, upon leaving Milborn-Hall, carried with him the arrow that had wounded him. The sight of the divine Harriot rendered him not only an admirer of her mental charms, but

passionately in love with her person. Until that period, he had constantly entertained the most absurd notions of love. Those women, who had accepted his offers of gallantry, were calculated only to give him the worst opinion of the sex in general; besides, his father had very imprudently permitted him to ridicule, in his presence, all delicate lovers. With such a disposition as Evan's, it was sowing venomous plants in a soil too well disposed to ripen them.

Evan, astonished by the novelty of the sentiment he felt, conceived a sort of inward shame; it was from a fear of being discovered that he so precipitately left his sisters and brother. When they asked him for a description of Lord Milborn's family, his ill-humour carried him to a grove, where he was soon afterwards joined by his father.

“Evan is very contemplative!”

“ Who I, Sir?—not in the least.”

“ Be more candid; two fine eyes occupy your thoughts at this moment.”

“ I don’t know what you mean.”

“ In that case, I will speak more plainly; you are in love with one of the daughters of Lord Milborn; with the eldest, I suppose.”

“ Ancelina!—no, indeed.”

“ Well then, with Harriot; she is very handsome.”

“ Very much so.”

“ And you are in love with her!”

“ I think not.”

“ I am, however, sure of it; and I approve your choice; you must pay court to her, and endeavour to obtain her for your wife.”

“ I have no inclination for matrimony.”

“ That inclination will come; Harriot is a charming girl.”

“ I own it, but I cannot submit to lose my liberty.”

“ How lose it?—Am I then a slave? A woman, once united to us, is a subject over which we may reign, despotically. The man who is weak enough to give up his privilege, is the only one who deserves to wear chains.”

Night coming on, they returned to the castle, and the conversation was deferred till another opportunity.

Godwin, on his part, could not refuse paying homage to the modest meekness and soft voice of Clara Growell: her image was placed in his heart; he could not cease thinking of her; but as no one perceived his new situation, he did not endure any sarcasms on the subject.

In a few days, Lord and Lady Milborn, with two of their children, Godwin and Ancelina, went to Sumptuous Castle. They were received with great

affability, and before they departed had an invitation to a grand dinner, to be given in the following week. The invitation was accepted, and the parties separated, mutually satisfied with each other.

At this second interview, Gideon shared his brother's fate. He fell in love with the interesting Ancelina. The circumstance did not escape his father; who, probably from having other views, informed his son that he would never consent to his union with Miss Milborn. Gideon became doubly mortified by this declaration from his father: he was as much astonished on finding himself discovered, as hurt that all hope should be frustrated; he did not, however, make any reply. Mr. Growell was so very severe, that none of his children dared to contradict him, nor to hazard any opinion that was not an echo of his own. Evan alone possessed

the talent of making Mr. and Mrs. Growell do just as he pleased. Each of them had contracted for him such a blind partiality, as to believe that he was perfectly faultless.

They were most busily employed in making preparations for the intended dinner. It was to have the appearance of a sort of *fête*. They had made choice of the anniversary of Mr. Growell's birth-day, and although the Milborn family had been personally invited, they thought it also proper to send a card of invitation.

On that day the family repaired to Sumptuous Castle. A table for fifty persons was laid out with a magnificence worthy of a monarch. All that it was possible for money to procure, appeared at this splendid repast. Twenty neighbouring families met there. On leaving the dining-room, they proceeded to the ball-room, which was illumi-

nated by a thousand lamps. At ten o'clock, the most brilliant fire-works were displayed; and the company did not separate until five the next morning.

Evan had contrived, during the ball, to hold a private conference with Harriot. Without manners, as without delicacy, he presumed to make to her the most blunt declaration. The daughters of Lord Milborn had received the most finished education. Harriot was not haughty, but she was conscious of the respect that was due to her, and she could not forbear manifesting her displeasure at a conduct so highly indecorous. Evan apologized for his rude eagerness, by pleading the excess of his passion. The excuse not being admitted, Miss Milborn turned from him, without making any answer. Evan was enraged at receiving what he called an insult. The stubbornness of his nature

revolted at the idea of his tenderness being rejected. Innumerable daring projects took place in his mind; and, the more freely to mature them, he withdrew long before the ball was over.

On the following day, he held a private conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Growell, and, on leaving them, became infinitely more calm. A wild joy, announcing his inward satisfaction, sparkled in his eyes.

CHAP. VII.

ALFRED was sincerely attached to his brother, and to his sisters; but Harriot was still nearer to his heart than the other two. Since his infancy, he had never concealed any thing from her: his pleasures, his disappointments, all were deposited in the bosom of that favourite and beloved sister. Harriot, on her side, never experienced more satisfaction than she derived from their communications. Nearly of the same disposition, and possessing the same inclinations, they were seldom of a contrary opinion. Whatever was utter-

ed by the one, had been almost intuitively conceived by the other.

The day after the entertainment given at Sumptuous Castle, Harriot and Alfred sought each other. The former hastened to meet her brother, as she wished to communicate to him what had passed on the preceding evening; but she no sooner beheld him, than the most serious reflections closed her lips.

“Perhaps,” thought she, “it might be dangerous to place in a young man such a confidence!”

Alfred, however, equally anxious to converse with his sister, was already by her side; and, after the good wishes of the morning, proceeded to ask her some questions relative to the amusements of the preceding evening. The new ideas, however, that reason had suggested to Harriot, caused her to reply to her brother, with a look somewhat vacant and embarrassed.

Alfred took her hand, which he gently pressed.

“ My sister is very reserved this evening ? ”

“ No, indeed, but what can I say to you, Alfred ?—You were also at Sumptuous Castle : in giving you an account of all that passed there, I should only repeat what you already know.”

“ I own that I *saw* every thing ; but, Harriot, I did not *hear* every thing : for instance ; I am thoroughly ignorant of what Evan Growell could possibly have to say to you, so as to take up half an hour of your time. It was certainly respecting either his family or our own.....—why do you blush, Harriot ?—Such a subject of conversation ought not to excite in you a moment’s confusion.”

“ Confusion ?—indeed, brother, you are strangely mistaken ; I don’t recollect that I ever put myself in the way of feeling confusion.”

“ My dear sister, you pretend to ring the changes upon the sense of my words; you must be convinced that no one does you more justice than myself; I could not then possibly mean to hint that the air of embarrassment you evinced in your reply, could proceed from any personal confusion; it was owing to the fear of my suspecting that Evan, whom I do not like, has perhaps said something to you.....”

“ He has said nothing to me, I assure you, Alfred.”

This was uttered with so much vehemence, that Alfred felt his suspicions increase.

“ It is enough, Harriot; I have no right to exact from you an avowal, which it might be distressing to you to make.”

Alfred, upon pronouncing those words, left her. His melancholy look affected Harriot; but she preferred be-

holding that, to confessing the truth. He had just given her fresh cause to preserve silence, without being sensible of it himself. He had acknowledged that he disliked Evan; it was become then doubly necessary to be cautious of not giving her brother reason to hate him.

Godwin had danced frequently with Clara; but if his eyes had explained his love, his tongue had not uttered more than customary compliments.

Gideon, the modest and timid Gideon, had contented himself with admiring in silence Lord Milborn's eldest daughter. The palpitations of his heart were, however, his only interpreters.

The two families had now been in the habit of meeting frequently, for more than six months. In vain had Evan endeavoured to find an opportunity of renewing his conversation with Harriot at the ball; she had so well

contrived to frustrate all his projects upon that head, that he could never see her for a moment without witnesses. Alfred seemed to comprehend his sister, by his way of seconding her views; whenever Mr. Growell's eldest son appeared at Milborn Hall, Alfred did not quit her for a moment.

Lord Milborn was very fond of walking over his grounds alone. He called frequently to see his farmers; and, extending sometimes his perambulations, did not return home until late.

Having one day forgotten himself in that manner, night overtook him, while he was yet far distant from his house. It was at the beginning of the month of October. The fear of alarming Lady Milborn and his children made him quicken his steps. His road lay through a large clump of trees, which he had scarcely entered, before three men attacked him; he was unarmed, and con-

sequently incapable of resistance. They immediately bound him with cords.

“Put out one of his eyes,” exclaimed one of the ruffians.

“Why not both?” replied another.

“No, only one; such are our orders;” when with the cut of a sharp knife, they executed this horrible menace. Lord Milborn screamed aloud, and endeavoured to escape; at that instant a man was seen running towards him, with a pistol in his hand.

“Villains!” said he, as he drew near, “I may, perhaps, sink under your force; but I will, at least, exterminate one of you;” and he directly fired his pistol, the contents of which reached no one, but so terrified the assassins, that they began to fly across the wood.

The stranger approached the wounded nobleman, released him from the cords, and recognized, by his voice, his worthy neighbour.

“ Lord Milborn!” he exclaimed;—
 “ what, is it *your* life that I have been
 happy enough to save!”

Notwithstanding his dreadful agonies, Lord Milborn held out his hand to his generous preserver, and entreated that he would accompany him to his house.— Mr. Growell, for it was himself whom chance had brought just in time to deliver his neighbour, presented him his arm.

The condition in which Lord Milborn was brought home, filled every heart with horror. His clothes covered with blood, and his face entirely disfigured: what a scene for the family by which he was adored!—A surgical valet-de-chambre put on a first dressing, while a carriage was dispatched to bring the first professional man in the country.

As soon as Lord Milborn had been

conveyed to bed, the whole family surrounded Mr. Growell, to be informed of all the particulars of that dreadful disaster. He replied, that, upon his return from a visit to one of the neighbouring families, finding the weather mild, and the evening pleasant, he had quitted his carriage, and sent his servants home, choosing to walk the remainder of the way; that, in passing by the skirts of the wood, he heard cries of distress, and, being in the constant habit of carrying pistols about him, he hastened to the spot, to attempt the rescue of the person who seemed to be so much in want of assistance; that on his approach he fired a pistol, without knowing whether he had wounded any of the highwaymen, but that he had, at least, forced them to fly. This account excited gratitude in every bosom; and, from that eventful day, Mr.

Growell was looked upon as the saviour of the family, and the best friend of the house.

The wounds Lord Milborn had received were not dangerous; and in a short time he recovered his health. He had, unhappily, lost an eye; and the cuts he had received from the knife, leaving frightful scars, had extremely altered his appearance; yet he was not the less dear to his wife and to his children.

This event, as I have already observed, changed the cool civility that had hitherto reigned among the heads of the families, into the most tender friendship. A week never elapsed without their visiting; and they frequently passed several days together at each other's houses.

This great intimacy rendered all Harriot's precautions fruitless. Evan found

several different opportunities of renewing his offence. Harriot, at last tired out, one day candidly told him, that he was the more to blame in continuing to torment her, as she not only did not love him, and never *could* love him, but that his conduct would end by inspiring her with aversion, and, perhaps, with hatred. This formal declaration so powerfully excited the anger of Evan, that he carried his audacity so far as to threaten to obtain her, no matter by what means. Harriot despised his fury as much as the compliments which he had till then addressed to her.

Alfred had remarked Evan's love for his sister, and suspected, from the care that she took to avoid him, his having had the temerity to avow it. He was, however, far from supposing to what extremities matters had gone. He was frequently on the point of mentioning the

subject to his sister; but he perceived that she wished to avoid it, and he loved her too sincerely, to contradict her will.

CHAP. VIII.

THE winter passed away, and the friendship between the two families increased every hour. An event, that appeared very singular to Lord Milborn, furnished Mr. Growell with an opportunity of giving a strong proof of his attachment.

Lord Milborn enjoyed a handsome fortune ; but, as he spent a great deal of money upon his poor dependents, he had never too much at the year's end. He did not, however, outrun his income, and was wholly clear of debt. Judge then of his surprise, when one morning two gentlemen of the law appeared

before him, and asked him for the payment of six thousand pounds, on a bond which he had signed. Lord Milborn, amazed, desired to see the bond. They showed it to him, and he knew his hand-writing; but at the same time protested that he had not a debt in the world.

“ You acknowledge, however, my Lord, *that* to be your own hand-writing.”

“ I acknowledge that it is exactly like it, but I declare that I never signed that paper.”

“ What a wretched subterfuge!--- You must either pay the money, or be conducted to prison.”

“ I shall certainly never pay a sum of money that I do not owe.”

A violent altercation began to arise. Alfred flew to the spot, and his father informed him of the imposition. Alfred asked leave to turn the men out of the

house. Lord Milborn, who wished that no disturbance should take place, prevented him, and preferred submitting to the law, under the certainty, he said, of punishing the guilty. Lady Milborn came into the room, followed by Godwin, her two daughters, and several servants. The men attempted to seize Lord Milborn. The servants looked first at Alfred, then at Godwin, and waited only a signal from either, to throw the legal myrmidons out of the windows: Mr. Growell came in at the same moment, demanding an explanation of what he had heard, and what he saw. He no sooner learned that a sum of money was to be paid, or his friend go to prison, than he cried out emphatically, "I will be his security, if it be for thirty thousand pounds.—Leave this house, gentlemen; my name is Growell."

They bowed respectfully, and withdrew.

“ Oh, my friend, what obligations have you laid me under !”

The four children fell upon his neck.

“ Wherefore thank me?—I have only done my duty.”

“ Be assured, my friend, that all this is an abominable falsehood ; I never signed a bond ; and I owe nothing more than trifles to my trades-people.”

“ No matter;—you own that the hand-writing is so exactly like your own, that it would deceive even yourself;—you must pay the money, my friend ; your character would suffer, were you to do otherwise.”

“ Indeed, I cannot, without putting myself to the greatest inconvenience.”

“ Make yourself easy on that head ; it is a trifle that I shall take upon myself to discharge.”

“ But, then, my dear Growell, I must acquit myself towards *you* ; and give me leave to assure you once more,

the employment of my whole income is found, even before I can receive it."

"You shall repay me in twenty years."

'Excellent man!'—replied Lady Milborn, while she cast an affectionate look upon Growell;—"how grateful must I ever be for your goodness, since you have prevented my Lord from pursuing an action, which, by exposing his name, might hereafter destroy his future peace!"

Mr. Growell strictly kept his word; for nothing more was heard of those officers of justice. Lord Milborn wished to give the necessary securities to his friend; but those were refused in a manner so peremptory, that it was deemed advisable to defer, until a future period, every proposal of that nature.

Gideon, in obedience to his father's commands, avoided every opportunity of seeing the object of his adoration;

but, alas! in a susceptible mind, love seldom becomes extinguished by common rules. The sentiment experienced by this amiable young man, was so far from being diminished by absence, that it seemed, on the contrary, every day to acquire additional strength. He seldom went to Milborn-Hall: his sisters, particularly Clara, were continually there, to see Ancelina. Those two charming girls were united by the most tender friendship; a disposition exactly similar seemed to contribute to the union. Whenever a mutual intimacy arises between two young people of the same sex, confidence is not backward in cementing the tie. There was no necessity for Gideon's questioning Clara, whenever she returned from her friend. Her greatest pleasure consisted in describing the graces of person and the beauties of mind of her dear Ancelina. Gideon listened, was enraptured, and

perpetually found new reasons to adore his divine mistress.

The reserved looks and, above all, the unfrequent visits of Mr. Growell's youngest son, became matter of astonishment. Ancelina could not but remember that, at the time of the first acquaintance between the two families, he not only constantly accompanied his father to Milborn-Hall, but likewise demonstrated towards herself, every delicate, and even particular attention. What then, could be his motive for avoiding every opportunity of seeing her?—It must be on her account, from her alone, that he fled, for she had particularly remarked it. Whenever she went to Sumptuous Castle, Gideon, as soon disappeared, and returned not till her visit was over. If, on the contrary, she remained at Milborn-Hall, Gideon never left his home; her sister and her brothers dwelt for ever on his praises, on their

return. They expatiated upon his amiable disposition, upon his accomplishments, and, especially upon his invariable sweetness of temper.

Ancelina, no longer able to support the idea of being the only person disagreeable to him, determined to inquire of her friend, whether she knew the reason of her brother's aversion towards her.

Clara smiled, and assured her that her brother had too much discrimination to hold in aversion one of the most amiable of her sex.

"And yet," continued Ancelina, "he expresses it, in the most pointed manner. More than six weeks have passed since he has ever spoken one word to me."

"I confess to you, that I have myself made the observation, and have mentioned it to him."

“Well, and what answer did he give you?”

“He coloured, and tears started in his eyes.”

“Come, Clara, acknowledge that he has said something to you.”

“Not a single word, I assure you.”

“I feel very unhappy in having inspired him with so much dislike.”

“I believe, my dear, that your opinion of him is very erroneous; shall I tell you what I think?”

“Let me entreat you to do so, my dear Clara.”

“Well then, I suspect that he is afraid of becoming too fond of you.”

“What nonsense, Clara!” and Angelina coloured as she continued; “but what reason can you allege for so strange an idea!”

“First, I see nothing strange in the supposition; but quite the contrary,

and a thing extremely natural. My friend is lovely; she possesses a thousand amiable and good qualities, and my brother has eyes to admire, and a heart to appreciate."

"Do you speak seriously?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"I would believe you, but allowing him to imagine me such as you have the goodness to say I am, should this be a motive for his never seeing me?"

"Indeed, Ancelina, I am incapable of solving such a mystery; I can only say, that I am sure my brother loves you, but I am ignorant of the motives which compel him to conduct himself towards you in such an extraordinary manner. I know him sufficiently, however, to be convinced that he has powerful ones; which, perhaps, we might approve, were they communicated to us."

Ancelina, by no means convinced,

shook her head, and changed the subject.

From the observations made by Ancelina, it was easy to believe that Gideon would not have to encounter with her indifference; but that unhappy youth was unacquainted with his own felicity: he possessed only the double mortification of knowing that his father would for ever oppose his union with the only woman he could love; and he was at the same time ignorant whether his suit would be favoured or rejected, supposing there was not any impediment on his own side.

Clara, upon leaving Milborn-Hall, reflected on all that Ancelina had said to her; and she resolved to sound her brother's sentiments, without, however, betraying her friend. An opportunity soon presented itself; for unhappy lovers want confidants. Gideon was tenderly attached to Clara; she was

the only one who could sympathize in his sorrows. The haughty Evan conducted himself towards him more like a master than a brother; and Aurea's mind was so feeble as to preclude the possibility of conversing with her for an hour together. Clara became soon after acquainted with every secret of Gideon's heart. She was not a little astonished at the order given by her father. How came it that he appeared to approve the violent passion of Evan for Harriot, without allowing his other son to be attached to her sister?—"Strange caprice of human nature!"—she mentally exclaimed, as she endeavoured to console the dejected Gideon, by persuading him that Mr. Growell might at some future period renounce his unaccountable determination.

CHAP. IX.

MR. GROWELL called one morning at Milborn-Hall; but instead of going, as was his custom, into the breakfast-room, he desired to be conducted to Lord Milborn's apartment. Their conference was but of short duration. They came down together in less than half an hour, and were, apparently both pleased. Mr. Growell staid but a short time. As soon as he was gone, Lord Milborn made a sign to his lady to follow him to the study, where he remained with her only a few minutes; and, on returning to the breakfast-room, ordered Harriot to go to her mother. These private conferences alarmed the mind of Har-

riot. She arose gently, and, fixing her eyes upon those of Alfred, who was visibly agitated, proceeded to the study. There Lady Milborn received her daughter with an embarrassed air: she made her a sign to sit down, and looked at her for some time without speaking. Harriot, with down-cast eyes, trembled while she waited the issue of a sentence that seemed going to be pronounced upon her, while a melancholy presentiment impressed her heart.

“ I fear, my daughter, that I am intrusted with a painful commission; for such it will undoubtedly prove, if the proposal that I am going to make should afflict you.”

Harriot took her mother's hand, which she kissed.

“ I believe, my dear, that your heart is free.”

Harriot coloured, and answered in the affirmative.

“ In that case, your father’s pleasure cannot meet with any obstacle.”

Lady Milborn paused a second time, and then proceeded ;—

“ A very advantageous offer now presents itself to your acceptance ; it comes from one of the sons of Mr. Growell.”

“ From Evan, I presume,” replied Harriot.

“ Yes, from Evan ;—he is a young man....”

Here Lady Milborn’s words failed her, and she paused again.

“ No praise, Madam, can succeed, if it is question of Evan ; in vain would my respectable mother undertake to flatter him ; it is a subject so ungrateful to my ear, that even truth itself must be silent.”

“ From the opinion that you seem to entertain, Harriot, of the husband proposed for you, I shudder at the answer

you give me room to expect; but know, child, that your father has given his word; and you must be fully convinced that, when once he has done so, nothing can ever urge him to falsify it."

"I trust that my parents have ever found me, throughout life, a dutiful and an affectionate daughter, entirely devoted to their wishes: I am even ready to sacrifice my life, could the sacrifice be useful to them; but I cannot, no, it is impossible for me to obey them in this particular; Evan is, to me, an object of detestation."

"Heavenly powers!—of what is he then guilty?"

"Of the greatest cruelty, as it is on his account that I owe this, my first sorrow, under the paternal roof."

"Can you attribute *that* to him as a crime?"

"Yes, Madam; because he knows that his proposal cannot meet with my

approbation. He has presumed, repeatedly, to speak to me of his odious passion; I have never concealed from him my aversion; to persist, in such a case, proves a heart without delicacy."

"His affection for you is great."

"My hatred for his person is still more so."

"This, Harriot, has the appearance of obstinacy."

"For Heaven's sake, Madam, do not *you* add to the number of my tyrants."

"You forget yourself, Harriot;—do you accuse your father?"

"Pardon oh, my mother, pardon the dreadful situation into which grief now plunges me!—but the idea, the bare idea, of becoming the wife of that monster agonizes my whole frame."

"What expressions you make use of, Harriot!"

"My tender mother, forget for one

moment that you are my father's interpreter, and tell me, sincerely, what is your opinion of Evan?"

"I believe him to be a man of honour."

"He *may* be so; but is that alone sufficient to secure a woman's happiness?—Does he possess one good quality?..... You are silent, because nothing can be said about it; but it is not the same with his faults, nor perhaps with his vices...."

"Harriot, you are going too far. I acknowledge that Evan is neither handsome nor yet pleasing, but he surely possesses some virtues."

"Do you know of any? I am sure that you do not; and is such the husband that my father destines to his daughter?—I repeat that I could die to prove to my father and yourself, my sincere and eternal attachment; but I never will marry the man I hate."

“ I am under the necessity then of telling you, once more, Harriot, that your father’s word is given.”

“ Ought he to have given it?—I will dare to add, how *could* he ?”

“ If your father heard you!—Oh, child, conceal from him this stubbornness of nature; it will be your ruin; what misery you are going to bring upon me!—Harriot, my dear Harriot, obey your father”—

“ I cannot!” she exclaimed, falling at her mother’s feet, and shedding a torrent of tears—“ tell my father that my hand shall never.....”

“ Hold, Harriot, do not conclude that sentence.”

“ My resolution is taken; never will I marry that man!”

“ Retire, girl! you forget the duty and respect that are due to your parents;—go, and reflect upon the impropriety of your conduct, and do not re-

turn but with the intention of fulfilling the wishes of those to whom you are indebted for your life."

"Then all is over, and my mother has banished me her presence for ever!"

"It remains with yourself to fix the term of your banishment; leave me, I require to be alone."

Harriot went out of the study, her heart agonized by despair. She was met by Alfred, who, perceiving her to be in tears, ran towards her.

"My dear Harriot, what is the matter? I fear..... from Mr. Growell's visit, but tell me,—quick!—what has happened?"

"To me the greatest of all misfortunes:—they insist upon my marrying Mr. Growell's son!"

"I will oppose it; no, no, my Harriot shall never become the wife of that monster, Evan!"

“Alas ! brother, my father has given his word.”

“Have you likewise given yours?”

“Oh, no!—but what torments will arise from it!—my refusal will enrage my father.”

“He cannot, surely, sacrifice his child !”

“He is under so many obligations to that Growell !”

“Let him acquit them all, by the renunciation of his whole property ; from this moment I relinquish every claim to my father’s inheritance, provided my Harriot escapes the misery of becoming the wife of Evan.”

Ancelina coming in, Harriot retired to her own apartment. She had not been there above an hour, when Lord Milborn joined her. He alternately employed prayers and threats, but his daughter could only answer by tears.

“You wish then, unnatural child !

that I should repay the services of one of the best of men by the blackest ingratitude; and that I should insult, in the grossest manner, him to whom I owe both my honour and my life."

"And cannot you, my father, testify your gratitude towards him, without plunging a dagger into your daughter's heart?"

Lord Milborn was overpowered by his rising emotion;—perceiving, too, that there was no possibility of changing his daughter's resolution; and being, wherewithal, too tender a father to make use of harsh measures, he contented himself by insisting only, that she should not, for the present, give any decisive answer.

"You may in time," said he, overcome the violence of your aversion; or, perhaps, he may not persevere in that of his love."

Harriot, satisfied that she had suc-

ceeded thus far, promised that she would not in future oppose the wishes of her father. It was determined, therefore, that Lord Milborn should tell his friend, that, as his daughter had never yet formed any idea of changing her situation, she wished to obtain six months, before she decided upon the matter.

Evan was extremely dissatisfied with this reply; but as he dared not to oppose a determination approved by both their parents, he endeavoured to arm himself with patience, and resolved to see Harriot frequently; a satisfaction which, under the present circumstances, it was no longer in her power to refuse.

Notwithstanding all Gideon's precautions, fate reserved for him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the sentiments of Ancelina. Chance, which frequently decides the good and the evil, occasioned his over-hearing a

conversation between Harriot Milborn and his sister Clara. He had the now dismal satisfaction to learn that he was beloved by her whom he idolized. Under every other circumstance, he would have thrown himself at the feet of his divine mistress; but reason, severe reason, now restrained him. Alas! that which would have made him the happiest of mankind, added pangs to those which he already endured. Had he suffered alone, he might, perhaps, have had courage enough to surmount his affliction; but to know that she who was deserving of every terrestrial felicity, should likewise be a victim to a hopeless passion, was more than his heart was capable to bear.

Despair usually betrays us into violent measures. Gideon presented himself before his father.—“I am too wretched,” said he, as he addressed him; “put an end, I beseech you, to my miseries.

Give me the means of going far distant ; the sight of Miss Milborn distracts me ; I am desirous to obey you, but I dare not trust my own heart. I am every moment in danger of sinking under its pressure. Some troops are going to America ; purchase me a commission ; it is the only way of saving me from doing that which would offend you."

Mr. Growell set out the following day for London, accompanied by his son ; all was speedily settled, and he did not return home until he had witnessed Gideon's embarkation.

CHAP. X.

THE reader may remember that, from the first interview between the two families, Godwin had been singularly struck by the personal charms of Miss Clara Growell. The high terms in which he mentioned her before his sisters and his brother bore some resemblance to the enthusiasm of romance. The facility of seeing Clara frequently, soon heightened into passion what was at first but simple admiration. Godwin began by making use of the language of his eyes; but perceiving only, in those of Miss Growell, gentleness, indulgence, and goodness, he ventured to speak.

Clara answered him only by a laugh; Gideon assured her that he was perfectly serious; and that with her consent, he would desire his father to address himself to Mr. Growell in his favour. She desired that he would at least wait some time before he took any steps of that nature.

The reason that induced Clara to make this reply to Godwin, did not proceed from indifference, for he was far from being disagreeable to her; and she would not have regretted his being proposed to her by her father; but Mr. Growell's prohibition to Gideon against thinking of marrying Lord Milborn's eldest daughter, induced her to apprehend that he would use the same rigour towards herself; and, to avoid Godwin's meeting with a direct refusal, she determined, before any thing went farther, to become acquainted with the intentions of her parents.

Clara took the opportunity while Mr. Growell was in London with his son, of having an explanation on the subject, with her mother. Mrs. Growell guessed her meaning, from the first words.

“ I suppose,” said she, “ Lord Milborn’s son is in love with you.”

“ I believe so,” replied Clara, casting down her eyes.

“ Well, he will have the mortification of finding his hopes blighted, for your father has other views for you.”

Clara turned pale.

“ Other views, did you say, Madam?”

“ Yes, my dear.”

“ I thought that, in consequence of the intimacy existing between Godwin’s family and mine, we might be permitted to think of it.....”

“ It is very possible, Clara, that you and Godwin may have conceived ideas of that kind; but, as I have just in-

formed you, your father has likewise had his own."

"And yet, Madam, both yourself and my father are desirous that an union should take place between my brother Evan and Harriot Milborn."

"Nothing can be more certain."

"Why should Evan be the only one invested with a right to marry the person he loves?"

"I forgive the impropriety of such a multitude of observations, upon condition that it is the only time you ever presume to hazard them."

The very severe manner in which Mrs. Growell spoke, imposed silence; and her daughter retired, to conceal the tears that both vexation and sorrow caused to flow,

Lady Milborn, good and gentle, adored all *her* children. It must, then, have been painful to her in the extreme to harshly treat her daughter, Harriot,

during the conversation wherein the latter possessed sufficient courage to unfold the energy of her character, when it was proposed to her to give her hand to Evan Growell. Harriot had quitted her mother, bearing with her, to all appearance, a portion of her enmity; fortunately Lord Milborn did not exact the sacrifice, and the father's condescension dispelled the clouds that had arisen between a tender mother and a dutiful child.

All was again calm and composed at Milborn-Hall, even when the Growells appeared there: Evan thinking himself certain of Harriot at the expiration of the procrastinated six months, was less violent in his importunities.

Ancelina, who was ignorant of the cause of Gideon's absence, imagined that he had an attachment elsewhere; an idea which, without doubt, afflicted her; but she had too refined an under-

standing not to conceal the grief that it occasioned. Clara, only Clara, penetrated the secret of her heart.

Godwin, who neither doubted his mistress's sentiments, nor the consent of their respective families, waited, with tender impatience, Clara's permission for his father's being applied to.

Even Alfred, whose disposition had for nearly twelve months taken a melancholy turn, seemed more satisfied; it was remarked by Harriot with sincere pleasure, for she most tenderly loved her brother.

Mr. Growell's departure, and his having taken away Gideon, made but a very slender impression on the minds of the two families, excepting, indeed, in the heart of Ancelina. That sweet girl deposited her secret griefs in the bosom of friendship. But Clara was not herself in a state of mind to bestow consolation. Her fate, alas! differed but very

little from that of her friend. A similar obstacle placed an insurmountable barrier to her happiness. The fear of increasing Ancelina's anxiety forced her to keep silence upon what personally concerned her. She did not, from the same motive, inform her of the extent of Gideon's affection for her; for it would be necessary in that case to explain to her Mr. Growell's incomprehensible conduct; and Clara felt that she ought not to accuse her father. Yet, but an hour before he left Sumptuous Castle, Gideon had thrown himself at his sister's feet, imploring her to assure Ancelina that his love for her would cease but with his life. Clara had promised; but she reflected that it would be adding to the misfortune, instead of diminishing it, and Ancelina remained in ignorance.

On Mr. Growell's return, he was informed by Mrs. Growell of the attach-

ment between Clara and Godwin; he had suspected it, and highly approved of the reply Mrs. Growell had made to her daughter, which he promised to confirm as soon as opportunity offered.

Godwin grew tired of waiting for the promised permission; and became so urgent, that Clara thought herself obliged to own to him the attempt she had made, and its ill success. Godwin possessed neither the mildness of Gideon, nor his respect for his parents. His first idea was to inform his father of the affront that was put upon his family by Mr. Growell: Clara restrained his impetuosity, for she loved and respected Lord and Lady Milborn.

“Wherefore,” said she, “make your parents uneasy? First see my father, and ask his permission to solicit yours to make the proposal. From his answer we shall know what to do.”

Godwin would not defer the expla-

nation another day; he left Clara in the gardens at Sumptuous Castle, and went up to the apartment of Mr. Growell, whom he found alone, and who smiled when he entered.

This excited confidence, and gave birth to hope in young Milborn's heart.

"Perhaps, Sir, you suspect the motive of my visit."

"Have you any other, my young friend, than that of coming to see us?"

"Yes, Sir, a very interesting subject now brings me here; for I come to solicit of you the happiness of my whole life."

"If I can contribute to make you happy, be assured, Godwin, that I shall be so myself. You know my sincere and warm friendship both for Lord Milborn and his excellent lady; you cannot therefore doubt of the pleasure I should feel in obliging one of their children."

This encouraging discourse dispelled

all Godwin's fears; and, without further preface, he solicited Clara's hand.

"I am sorry that your wishes were not made known to me six months ago. I then entered into an engagement for my daughter, with an old friend, and nothing earthly can tempt me to retract it: my word is sacred."

"You consulted, then, at that time, Clara's inclination?"

"My daughter is too well educated to have any will but mine."

"But, Sir, Miss Growell has now, perhaps, a different attachment."

"That is impossible."

"I assure you, Sir, that neither your friend, his son, nor his *protégé*, can be ever beloved by Clara. Her heart is mine, and"

"Young man, you deceive yourself; my daughter was surely jesting with you; she never could, nor ought to enter into any engagement without my

permission; and suffer me to advise you not to mention any nonsense of this kind to your father. It would be very unpleasant were such childish follies to occasion any coldness between us. I repeat to you, that my daughter is disposed of; she must adhere to that, or have to contend with her father's curse."

"Gracious heaven! Sir, what excessive severity!"

"There is no excessive severity in that, Sir; my authority over my children is, I believe, incontestible. Who dare dispute it? I must leave you, Sir; I have business that prevents my staying with you any longer."

After such a farewell audience, it was not possible for Godwin to continue in Mr. Growell's apartment; he withdrew, and went in search of Clara. She no sooner perceived him, than she judged of the uselessness of the step that he had taken. His countenance heated, and

his eyes inflamed by passion, explained enough.

“Well, Godwin!”

“Well, Clara, there is no hope of happiness for me in this world, if you are as unreasonable as your father.”

He then gave a full account of all that had passed between Mr. Growell and himself.

“I was in the right, as you see,” said she, “to prevent your speaking to your father before you had seen mine: I know his obduracy.”

“And you would suffer them, Clara, to dispose of you as they would of an automaton?”

“It must be so, since I cannot prevent it.”

“How easily you submit!”

“What would you have me do?”

“If I was sure of your affection, Clara, I should then less hesitate to tell you.”

“That doubt, Godwin, after my avowal, implies an insult.”

“Pardon, I do not doubt; but I fear that false delicacy.”

“Speak out, Godwin; those half sentences perplex me.”

“Well then, Clara, we have but one step to take, which is to go and be married in Scotland.”

“I don’t know whether I should laugh, or be angry at your proposal.”

“If you reject it, tremble for the effect of my despair.”

“Surely, Godwin, you have lost your senses !”

“I have, indeed ! and it is you to whom I stand indebted for the loss : you have done the mischief ; have kindness and justice enough to repair it.”

“What can have put such an idea into your head ?”

“The indelicate conduct of your father, and my own affection.”

“ You would have me dishonour myself by a proceeding.

“ In going with your husband, where is the dishonour ?

“ You are not my husband.”

“ I *shall* be such, and your father will be found to forgive us ; if you refuse me, Clara, I depart immediately.”

“ Whither ?—To Milborn-Hall ?”

“ What cutting language !—No, Clara, I shall not return to my family ; I will fly to the end of the world, to terminate there my grief and my existence.”

“ A tear fell upon Clara’s hand, which Godwin held in both his ; that tear overcame her. Who can, in fact, resist the tears of what is dear to them ? Clara did not wholly acquiesce with Godwin’s wishes ; but she promised to consider of the means of settling matters, in order that they might be united. She desired two days to determine.—

Godwin, almost sure of gaining the victory, returned to Milborn-Hall.

Five months had now expired since the promise made to Evan, and the sixth was to terminate the stated period. Harriot was not the only one who dreaded it; Alfred shuddered at the idea of such an ill-assorted union; every day brought the discovery of new faults in Evan's character. Lord and Lady Milborn, who studied to find out in him some good qualities, perceived but too plainly that their daughter's antipathy had reason for its foundation; but in what way could they inform the man they esteemed, and from whom they had received so many proofs of regard, that his son was not worthy to become one of their family?"

The two days demanded by Clara were expired, and Godwin went in the evening to Sumptuous Castle, but he was not able to see his beloved. Mr.

Growell informed him, that she was gone to pay a visit with her mother. Grieved by the intelligence, he slowly returned home. The next day he met with the same disappointment; and for three successive days, Clara was, to him, invisible. On the fourth, however, he saw her at Milborn-Hall, whither she accompanied Mrs. Growell. Finding himself for a moment alone with her, he reproached her with having been so remiss in the performance of her promise. She easily obtained his forgiveness, upon proving that it was not her fault. He began immediately upon the subject nearest his heart, and waited her reply.

“Hear it then, decidedly,” she said: “If in three months no change takes place in matters as they now stand, I will then consent to undertake the journey you have proposed to me.”

Godwin remonstrated against the

length of time;—he entreated, he supplicated: all was in vain—Clara would not contract it by a single day; and Godwin, not being able to succeed any better, was obliged to yield to the will of his sovereign.

Clara did not think it necessary to confide to Ancelina the present state of her mind and of her heart: it was not, therefore, the moment to speak to her of what had been settled with her brother. There are certain confidences which even friendship must not share.

CHAP. XI.

THE six months were nearly expired, and Lord Milborn did not know in what manner to excuse himself to his friend. He was determined not to bestow his daughter upon Evan, whom he began to hate almost as much as she did. But what was he to say to his worthy friend, Growell?—Lady Milborn, whom he usually consulted in all important concerns, was as much embarrassed as himself. She proposed, however, to go the day next preceeding the dreaded period, to Sumptuous Castle; and to confide to Mr. and Mrs. Growell

the repugnance that Harriot felt against the intended alliance.

“Surely,” said she to her Lord, “they are too much our friends to expect that we should exert our authority upon an occasion in which the happiness of one of our children is at stake. I shall, however, in speaking of Evan, make use of every precaution that delicacy requires.”

This proposal presented but a feeble prospect of success to Lord Milborn; but was the only one that could be adopted; it was, therefore necessary to have recourse to it.

Lady Milborn went, as she had proposed, to Sumptuous Castle, and was there by eleven in the morning. She inquired for Mr. Growell, and was immediately shown into his study. The undertaking was arduous. Her ladyship had an air of embarrassment which surprised Mr. Growell.”

“ You have given us, Sir, so many proofs of your attachment to our family, that it is silly in me not to dare, without trembling, to solicit another favour.”

“ As your ladyship feels your fault, and acknowledges it, I should be still more guilty myself, were I to add to your reproaches, by any of mine.”

He drew his chair nearer to that on which she was sitting, and took her hand, which he pressed gently.

“ May I be informed of the subject which has appeared worthy of an apology from your ladyship?—Speak, Madam: you must be sensible that my greatest pleasure will ever consist in subscribing to whatever can be gratifying to Lord Milborn, and to yourself.”

“ The marriage projected between your son Evan and our daughter Harriot would be a great addition to our happiness.”

“ It would insure both Mrs. Growell’s and my own felicity.”

“ But Harriot wishes to continue in a state of celibacy.”

“ Few young people are of that way of thinking.”

“ It is very true; and her father and myself have endeavoured, by every possible means, to change her ideas, respecting matrimony; but her resolution seems to be taken. Yesterday she fell at my lord’s feet, to implore that he would suffer her to follow her own inclination; in vain did he employ both entreaties and remonstrances; nothing could dispose her to obedience. My Lord is so very fond of his children, that he could not, without the utmost repugnance, decide upon forcing their inclinations.”

Here Lady Milborn cast her eyes upon the ground, and waited Mr. Gro-

well's reply. He remained for some seconds without speaking, and seemed to be lost in deep reflection, while his countenance strongly testified his inward agitation. He arose, paced the chamber, and resumed his seat.

“ In vain would I endeavour to conceal from your ladyship, that what you have just said, gives me the greatest uneasiness. I was so far from expecting that an union, so far advanced, could be thus broken, that I could not command my first emotions. I had looked forward to the happiness of seeing the attachment, that binds me to your lord and to yourself, cemented by the union of our children. My son Evan is greatly to be pitied. He adores Harriot, and I perceive that he is not beloved by her. God forbid that I should require of my friend to force his daughter to the marriage!—I release him

from his promise. Will you have the goodness to tell him so; and, to add, that however Growell may feel himself disappointed, he will, nevertheless, be the friend of Lord Milborn?"

Lady Milborn wished to acknowledge her obligations.

"Your ladyship owes me none; like you, I ought to reflect upon the future comfort of my children; and, when matrimony is in the case, affection ought to be mutual. From what you have told me of Harriot's sentiments, it would be impossible for Evan to make her happy, or to be so herself. You see that I judge for both; and while we are only just, we do not confer obligation."

Lady Milborn left Sumptuous Castle, delighted with the open and generous conduct of Mr. Growell. On her return to Milborn-Hall, she restored peace and satisfaction to every breast.

A general joy seemed to diffuse itself around, because Evan Growell was not to marry Harriot Milborn. The idea of that marriage had afflicted every one, Miss Milborn's misery being deemed the certain consequence. Evan was universally detested; and the reason was very plain: he had nothing amiable about him. The first servant who heard of the happy change, ran to inform the rest; and, before evening, the news had spread throughout the whole neighbourhood.

Harriot covered her mother's cheek with kisses and with tears. "You have this day," said she, "given me more than life; oh, my mother, my dear, my tender mother! how exquisitely happy have you made me!"

Alfred was in extasy; and Lord Milborn breathed more freely than he had done for the last six months. Ancelina ran to embrace her sister, and partake of her joy.

Godwin, alone, could not conceive, he said, how it was possible, since Harriot was not fond of Evan, that she ever consented to give him her hand. With him, filial obedience was but an empty sound. He should never acknowledge, he added, any other guide than his own inclinations, or those of the woman who might be dear to him.

On the following day, Growell, accompanied by his wife and his daughter Clara, came, without invitation, to dine at Milborn-Hall. He said they had come purposely to convince the family that he bore no resentment towards them, from what had passed the day before. There was something so extremely delicate both in the proceeding and the manner of it, as to attach still more forcibly Lord Milborn to his friend.

The dinner passed very agreeably;

the name of Evan was never mentioned. During the evening walk, Harriot laid hold of Clara's arm, who gave the other to Ancelina; those three young people left the rest behind, and Clara then first heard of the breaking off of the marriage between her brother and Harriot.

“It must be on that account then,” she said, “that my brother is so very ill tempered. The dairy-maid told me yesterday, that Lady Milborn had been in the morning; that she had inquired only for my father; and that, after having remained with him an hour in the study, she returned without seeing my mother. Evan had been out with the hounds since seven in the morning; on his return, at three, he was desired to go immediately to his father; they remained together until the dinner-bell rang, when Mr. Growell entered the dining-room alone, and Evan sent an

apology; going to bed, he said, excessively fatigued by the morning's exercise. As the clergyman, Mr. Chirping, dined with us, my father and mother could only converse upon indifferent subjects. When tea was announced, Evan came, according to custom: but he looked thoughtful, and contradicted Aurea and myself continually. I grew angry at last, which he did not seem to attend to; but went on in that disagreeable manner, until he forced me to retire to my chamber. This morning he scolded all the servants, and has occasioned two of them to be discharged. After what you have just told me, I am no longer surprised; and suppose that he will finish by exasperating every one around him."

"And yet," said Ancelina, "he has no one but himself to blame.—Why, when he was certain of my sister's in-

difference, did he persevere in his wish to marry her?"

The hour of separation being come, the Growell family took leave, and returned to Sumptuous Castle.

Lord Milborn had, for many years past, banished from his mind every idea of ambition. A peaceful life was become his element, and he never remembered the court, but to pity those who were so far enslaved by it, as to sacrifice their inclinations, which would frequently lead them to keep from it. What then must have been his surprise, upon receiving a letter from the Minister, stating that his Majesty had just appointed him to an embassy!—He had no hesitation in refusing the honour conferred upon him; but he judged it necessary to take the refusal, and personally to thank the King for the notice that had been taken of him.

The idea of the journey was unpleasant to Lord Milborn; it was painful to absent himself from his home, where he had resided peaceably and happily during ten or twelve years.

Mr. Growell, to whom he communicated the contents of the Minister's letter, was of opinion that it was indispensibly necessary for him to acknowledge his Majesty's goodness, by showing himself at court, were it only once. His departure was therefore fixed for the third day after the receipt of the letter. His friend and Mrs. Growell promised faithfully, that they would go every day, during his absence, to Milborn-Hall, to keep her ladyship company. Lord Milborn went, accompanied by Godwin, instead of Alfred, who was confined to his chamber by a sprain in his foot.

During the first three or four days, Mrs. Growell was true to her promise.

Herself, with her two daughters, passed every day at Milborn-Hall; but Evan had not appeared there since Harriot's formal rejection of him. A serious indisposition, that attacked Clara's mother, obliging her to remain at home, Lady Milborn went almost every morning to her friend, and usually continued with her until seven in the evening.

The ladies, on their return, frequently got out of the carriage, which they sent home, and walked about a third of the way. The exercise proved salutary to Lady Milborn; and Alired, who knew the hour of his mother's return, often strolled out to meet her.

One day, when Ancelina, confined to the house by a violent head-ach, which had tormented her nearly a week, had not been able to accompany her mother, her ladyship and Harriot, according to custom, when they returned from Sumptuous Castle, got out of the

carriage, about a mile distant from the house. The path they followed was through a thick and extensive wood, rendered pleasant and refreshing by its coolness and its shade. It was an early hour, and Lady Milborn proposed to Harriot their going further into the wood, and reposing there for a short time. Scarcely were they seated on the grass, when four men, all masked, appeared before them; who, after having separately bound and gagged them, began dragging them farther into the wood. The unfortunate women, not being able either to cry out, or make the least resistance, gazed upon each other with looks of extreme grief and frantic terror. At the moment that the villains were carrying off their victims, the sound of horses, at full speed, was heard. A man and a woman, also masked, approached the scene of action.

“ Stop a moment,” cried the woman, in a feigned voice; when, springing from her horse, and looking attentively at Lady Milborn, she commanded them to take her away. The unhappy mother cast a piteous look upon her daughter, and was soon out of sight. The woman whispered to the man who came with her; commanded the other to retire; remounted her horse, and rode off, leaving Harriot in a situation the most perilous and dreadful, wholly at the mercy of a stranger, whose appearance was alone sufficient to fill her with the most torturing apprehensions. He drew near to her; took her in his arms, and caressed her in a manner, that left no doubt of his guilty intentions. Harriot, excited both by rage and revenge, collected strength sufficient to tear assunder the cords by which she was bound; when, dragging the gag out of her mouth, she caused the wood to resound with

her cries and lamentations. Notwithstanding her courage and exertion, she would have been, however, inadequate to resist her furious oppressor, who was a man of uncommon strength, had not providence, at the moment, served her more efficaciously.

Alfred, attracted by her cries, left the high road, to fly to the spot where the voice of misery was heard. He arrived there, and, O heaven! what a sight presented itself to his view!—His beloved sister, her hair hanging loose, and her dress torn, was in the arms of a man who wore a mask, and who was proceeding with the most ferocious violence. Alfred had nothing about him but a stick, yet ran towards the villain, and was going to strike him, when a pistol shot, which he received in the arm, deprived him of the means of punishment. He was resolved, however, to defend his sister, were his life to pay

the forfeit. He endeavoured to seize the monster with his other arm; but with his fist he knocked him down, and began to search for another pistol. Harriot perceived it, guessed his intention, and again made the air resound with her cries. But soon a friendly fainting-fit closed her eyes upon her brother's assassination.

To this dreadful moment succeeded one of unexpected happiness. A man on horseback rode towards them, and instantly dismounted. He fell upon the ravisher, and tore him from his victim; when, holding a large case-knife to his breast, he forced him to retreat. This humane being, whom heaven seemed to send, was Mr. Growell. How sincerely he rejoiced, he said, that he had called at Milborn-Hall, on his way home!—Alfred arose; and found that he had received only a flesh wound, and that his arm was not broken. Not-

withstanding the blood that flowed copiously from it, and the anguish he endured, he was anxious to convey Harriot himself. In vain did Mr. Growell solicit for the charge; Alfred would not consent to it. He only requested him, as he could go so much faster, to hasten to the Hall, that the servants might be in readiness to receive, and restore his sister to life.

It was with the greatest difficulty that Alfred reached home. Fortunately the servants, instructed by Mr. Growell, came out to meet him, and joined him in the pleasure-ground, at the moment when, his strength failing, he found it impossible to proceed. He had no sooner placed his sister under the care of the servants, than he sunk senseless on the ground. How deeply was Ancelina shocked and afflicted, on thus beholding two persons so dear to her!—Neither of them gave any sign of life. The

surgical valet-de-chambre satisfied her so far as to assure her, that her sister was only in a fainting-fit; and that Mr. Milborn's wound did not bear the slightest symptom of danger.

Ancelina longed to make every inquiry of Mr. Growell; but he was too busily employed in attending his young friends. Mr. Growell had, besides, assured her, that he would not leave the house until he had seen the two children of his friend perfectly safe. She was astonished at his telling her, that Lady Milborn continued at Sumptuous Castle, and had allowed Harriot to return home alone. Her anxiety would have been greatly increased if the coachman and footman had returned, and told her that their lady had quitted Mrs. Growell's house with her daughter, and that they had left them both on the skirts of the wood, where they were in the constant habit of alighting;

but these men had stopped at an ale-house, at the entrance of the village, and did not return till two hours after the arrival of Alfred and Harriot at the Hall.

Alfred came to himself before his sister. His first care was to inquire after her. Mr. Growell, who never left her bed-side, assured him that she was much better. He invented that plausible falsehood, in order to restore Alfred's tranquillity. His wound, which had been dressed during his state of insensibility, was very slight, and he did not suffer much from it after the recovery of his senses.

A few minutes after Alfred's revival, Ancelina had the satisfaction of seeing her dear Harriot open her eyes, and endeavoured to articulate a few words; but, alas! of what short duration was that pleasing moment! Harriot was in a state of alarming delirium; a burn-

ing fever attended it, and the wildness of her eyes announced the ravage within. Her words, which could be scarcely distinguished, sufficiently proved the total absence of reason! "They wore," said she, "frightful masks, those who carried her away; she could not cry out any more than myself; and that woman!—how barbarously she looked at us! her sepulchral voice is still in my ears.—In heaven's name, run after the murderers! I know they will kill her; the monsters!—they will kill an angel of goodness. Were my father to see them, he would know them, perhaps; but no, they were all in masks; and yet, I think—oh, yes, it, was him! I knew him by his shape, and more than that, by his wickedness. A wretch!—I saw him murder my brother, my poor Alfred!—Well!—we shall soon meet again!"

This incoherent discourse did not

afford any explanation to Ancelina. She believed that it proceeded solely from the excessive violence of the fever. But the sort of serenity into which she had lulled herself, gave way to horror, on the arrival of Lady Milborn's carriage. As soon as it entered the court every one flew too see if their lady was returned. The consternation was excessive, when the coachman and footman said, that they had left her ladyship and her daughter at the entrance of the wood. The situation in which Miss Harriot and Alfred were returned, excited the most dreadful apprehensions respecting the fate of Lady Milborn. The servants, finding it impossible to put any questions either to the brother or the sister, addressed themselves for every particular to Mr. Growell; but it was become necessary to inform Miss Ancelina of the truth, who still believed her mother to be at Sump-

tuous Castle. That young person then clearly understood, that the anguish of mind so pathetically portrayed in the words of Harriot were less the effect of her disorder than of the dreadful remembrance of the preceding events.

Mr. Growell informed Ancelina, that having passed the whole day from home, at the house of a friend, whom he named, eight miles distant, he preferred, instead of returning directly to the castle, to go a mile and half out of his road, and call at Milborn-Hall, where he was informed that Alfred had just walked out to meet his mother. He galloped on, hoping to join them. He then mentioned how he had been attracted to the spot by cries of distress ; but, as he did not see any thing of Lady Milborn, it was impossible for him to develop the melancholy subject.

Harriot was the only person who could give any account of it; and her situa-

tion was then such, that it was impossible to question her.

Notwithstanding the assurances given by the surgical valet-de-chambre, of Alfred's wound not being dangerous, the porter thought it his duty to send for a professional gentleman, the same who had attended Lord Milborn at the time of his dreadful misfortune. Mr. Growell approved the precaution; and not chusing to leave Milborn-Hall before he could be perfectly satisfied as to the situation of the family, he sent off an express to Sumptuous Castle, to say that he should not sleep there.

The night following was equally unfavourable both to the brother and the sister. Alfred's wound was certainly slight, but his deeply-agitated mind would not admit of repose. Mr. Growell, who remained constantly at his bed-side, made use of every endeavour, but in vain, to restore him to some degree of tranquil-

lity. As he was continually inquiring about his mother, Mr. Growell told him, that, finding herself somewhat indisposed, she had consented to remain at Sumptuous Castle. He satisfied him in the same manner, and with more probability than truth, on the questions that he put to him, concerning Harriot.

That sweet girl was no better. Her delirium increased; and, supposing herself at the moment of the catastrophe which would have deprived her of her honour and her life, she perpetually uttered the words “ Help!—Murder!”—Fortunately her chamber was at a considerable distance from Alfred’s; he must otherwise have heard her screams; for the people who sat up in the room were agonized, throughout the night, by the piercing cries of their young mistress.

CHAP. XII.

BETWEEN the hours of seven and eight the next morning, a carriage was heard rattling into the court. Ancelina, who was already in her sister's chamber, flew to the window, in the fond hope of first witnessing her mother's return. But, alas! how vain was that hope!—She recognised the liveries and the arms of her neighbour, and perceived Mrs. Growell alighting from her coach. That lady had risen at an early hour, anxious to be informed of the situation of her dear Harriot. Having learned from the express that her husband had sent in the evening, the sad

events that had taken place, she came to offer to the children of her friends every assistance that the most tender friendship could bestow. She first inquired whether they had heard of Lady Milborn. Ancelina assured her that no discovery had yet been made; and that she was herself suffering every torturing anxiety on her mother's account. Mrs. Growell seemed deeply affected at the mystery which reigned over that fatal adventure. "If," said she, "Harriot was in a situation to explain herself, we should, perhaps, find out the means of tracing it to its source!—It is dreadful not to know what to think, when we are dying to know how to act."—Ancelina, sensible of the warm interest which Mrs. Growell took in their misfortunes, most affectionately testified her gratitude.

At the same moment, the surgeon, who had been sent for, arrived. Har-

riot, turned round, and looked steadfastly upon him; when, to the great astonishment of all present, she attempted to lay hold of him; and began to scream out again, which she had not done for the two last hours. "There he is," said she; "there is the villain!—Let him be taken. I know him;—his mask could not deceive me;—it is himself!—What other man could be guilty of such an act?"—

The surgeon, astonished by this strange and unexpected apostrophe, hastened to seize her hands, which were still endeavouring to reach him. "Yes," said she, "this is the way in which the monster held me, when I tore asunder the vile cords with which he had bound me. In the name of justice, divine and human, have him secured!"—Her eyes rolled furiously in her head, and her look was terrible.

She then gazed upon Mrs. Growell. "Almighty God!—am I then still in the power of those assassins?—That is the cruel woman who assisted in all the atrocities committed against us.—See with what insulting joy she reflects upon the sufferings of my poor mother!—She laughs at our calamities:—she, too, was masked, but I knew her by her voice! Say, vile wretch, what have you done with Lady Milborn?—Confess, restore her to us, and I will forgive you all."

Mrs. Growell, far from being offended by such an outrage, took Harriot in her arms, and pressed her closely to her breast. Her eyes, wet with tears, evinced her inward grief.

"My dear Harriot, recollect your mother's friend, your own, and that of your whole family. I am come to nurse you, and to offer every consola-

tion. Look at me, Harriot;—do you take me for the monster of whom you have been speaking?”

Those affectionate words would have had, doubtless, the desired effect, could they have been heard; but Harriot, exhausted by the efforts she had made, had again sunk into a state of total insensibility. The surgeon ordered her a composing draught, but could not form any decisive opinion respecting her situation. He judged, he said, that an entire revolution had taken place in her blood. Her limbs, even when free from pain, trembled violently. It was necessary for the utmost precaution to be used, and probably it would be a considerable length of time before she could be restored to reason, and to health.

Such was the opinion of the surgeon; who, on leaving her, went to Alfred. He examined the wound; and con-

firmed the opinion given by the domestic surgeon. Alfred was not, however, free from fever; and, although he did not rave like Miss Milborn, he perceived that his mind was little less disturbed. After having prescribed a regimen, and the necessary medicines, he left the room with Mr. Growell, whom he solicited to send an express to London, to hasten Lord Milborn's return, whose presence seemed indispensable in the present distressing state of his house.

They went into the garden, where they were joined by Mrs. Growell. She informed her husband of the incomprehensible ideas that Harriot had conceived, in accusing the surgeon and herself as principal actors in the late tragic scene. Mr. Growell appeared greatly incensed by it; but the surgeon gave him to understand, that delirium was temporary madness; and that it

would be little short of that, in any person who resented whatever words might escape from those who laboured under either affliction. The nabob acknowledged himself to be in the wrong, and inquired, both of the surgeon and of his wife, whether they could form any idea who were the persons concerned in that infamous transaction. They both answered in the negative; and, after lamenting the misfortunes that had lately befallen that truly-excellent family, they parted.

The surgeon, who had a patient to visit in the neighbourhood, went there, but promised to return within four hours. Mrs. Growell went to take leave of Ancelina, assuring her, that she would come back in the evening, with her two daughters; and that she would leave Clara to pass the night in Harriot's apartment. Mr. Growell went immediately to write to Lord Mil-

born. The melancholy style of his letter sufficiently testified his sorrow on being obliged to convey such dismal intelligence. He gave him an account of all he had witnessed, yet dwelt but little on the happiness he had experienced, in delivering Harriot and Alfred from the hands of their enemies. He entreated Lord Milborn to set out immediately upon the receipt of his letter; and as soon as he had finished writing it, he sent off one of the men-servants from Milborn-Hall, and returned to the wounded Alfred.

His first questions, whenever any one entered his room, were always relative to his mother and his sister. All the servants had received their orders, and constantly replied, that Lady Milborn was still too unwell to leave Sumptuous Castle, but that Miss Harriot was recovering very fast. The conformity of this language, held by so many different

people, calmed a little the perturbed heart of Alfred. Yet he said, within himself, "If my mother was not very ill indeed, she would fly to her afflicted children; or, perhaps, they have, from motives of prudence, concealed from her the terrible adventure of the wood;—but, on the other hand, if Harriot is so much better, as they assure me, what prevents her from coming to see her Alfred?—Can she doubt the pleasure that I should derive from her visit?"—All these reflections filled his mind with doubts as to the veracity of what was said to him.

Mrs. Growell came, as she had promised, with her daughters. Clara threw herself into Ancelina's arms, and their tears flowed mutually. They went into Harriot's apartment, who did not, fortunately, renew the dreadful scene of the morning. Her delirium still continued; her wandering mind no

longer pointed out present objects; she knew them only by recollection, and her tears and moans penetrated every heart. Clara and Aurea were inconsolable as they listened to her; but Clara, possessing more sensibility, sympathised more tenderly in the sorrows of her friend.

The surgeon being returned, and having consented, though not without difficulty, to remain some days at the Hall, his patients in the town requiring his care, found Harriot quite as ill as he had left her. Clara and Ancelina, alarmed by his look, entreated that he would inform them whether he apprehended any danger.—“Well, then,” said he, “I will give you my opinion candidly. If in four-and-twenty hours no change takes place in her situation, nothing short of a miracle can save her.”

This decision was agonizing to every

heart. The nurse, and the female attendants who surrounded the bed, stood fixed in deep despair, and sobbed aloud. The funereal sound caught the patient's attention. She opened her eyes, gazing alternately upon every object. The women spontaneously dropped upon their knees, and implored Heaven to restore Miss Milborn to herself. This melancholy scene acted like electricity upon the mind of Harriot; she began to recognise all around her, and the attachment, of which such tender proof was given, affected her so sensibly, that tears rushed down the cheeks that were purpled by excess of fever. A visible alteration took place in the surgeon's countenance; while every other was bathed in tears, his smiled with joy, as he pronounced, that all danger was past. The universal gladness that succeeded, showed that every

one felt as if they had recovered a beloved and departed sister.

Harriot, after ruminating for a few minutes, inquired with much anxiety whether her mother was returned home. This question, which could not be answered, without inflicting fresh sorrow, caused a general silence. Mrs. Growell, who possessed more presence of mind, hastened to reply, that letters had been received from her friends, and that they were expecting her every day.

“Does she give any account of the indignity of her treatment, and of the motives for carrying her off?”

“It is her intention to explain to her family the miraculous interposition of Providence in her favour.”

The manner in which Mrs. Growell spoke could leave no doubt of her veracity, and Harriot invoked the Su-

premc Being in prayers and thanksgiving.

The three young people and the attendants were delighted at the facility with which Mrs. Growell had deceived the poor patient. A recital of the truth, doubtless, would have plunged her into the tomb. As soon as the interesting girl had fulfilled the sacred duties of filial affection, she inquired after the health of her brother. Of him they related the truth; his wound was so trifling, they hoped and expected, they said, that he would be very soon capable of visiting his sister.

Prudence had surmounted the ardent desire that every one felt to learn the particulars of Lady Milborn's disappearance. Harriot had planted the thorn of misery in every heart. From the exclamations, the complaints, and the broken sentences she had uttered, it was easy to guess that her mother

had been forcibly carried off; but what motive could palliate so horrible a deed?—and who had dared to effect it? —They wished for some explanation from Harriot; but if the most delicate precautions were not observed on her first return to reason, she would be inevitably lost. The surgeon highly approved the subterfuge Mrs. Growell had employed, and requested that the same story might be continued four-and-twenty hours longer, as the patient might by that time acquire sufficient strength to give the recital, so impatiently expected.

Mrs. Growell, greatly tranquillized about Miss Milborn, went into Alfred's chamber, where she found her son Evan; who, notwithstanding his indifference respecting all events that did not personally concern him, thought it necessary to evince something like feeling for Alfred. He inquired of his

mother respecting Harriot; who said, what was very true, that she was getting better, and would in a short time be able to rise, and attend to her protector. She cast an obliging look at Alfred, as she pronounced those words.

“Did not my father,” said Evan, “rescue Miss Milborn from the people who had so shamefully assaulted her?”

“He was the saviour of us both,” replied Alfred, looking affectionately at Mr. Growell. “But for him, my life had been taken, and my unfortunate sister would have fallen a prey to a brutal ravisher.”

“Was he an assassin, or a ravisher?” said Evan.

“He was both,” replied Alfred in a hollow tone of voice.

“But cannot you think of any individual?—It seems almost impossible that the people, who perpetrated the

crime, should not have been once known to you as enemies!"

"I know but one person capable of such infamy; but as I have nothing yet beyond suspicion, I shall wait till I am in a situation to acquire something like certainty before I explain myself."

"Suspicion!" said Mr. Growell with precipitation; "but suspicion, my friend, is sufficient to lead on to proof. Will you place confidence enough in me, to tell me what you think, and be assured that I will second your every endeavour, as far as it is possible? These iniquitous mysteries ought to be developed, and the guilty should be punished with the most extreme severity."

"My husband is in the right, my dear Alfred; open your whole heart to him, and put it in our power to unravel a thread which may conduct us to the important discovery."

As Mrs. Growell was rising to with-

draw, that she might leave Alfred at liberty to explain himself to Mr. Growell, he inquired of her whether she had received any intelligence of his mother.—She assured him, that Lady Milborn would be at home on the following day, and satisfy them all. Then, whispering her husband, she advised him to reveal the whole truth to Alfred, who seemed to her to be sufficiently restored to health, to support, as a man, the misfortune of which he was still ignorant. Evan took leave of Alfred, wished him a speedy recovery, and left the room with his mother.

In vain did Mr. Growell implore Alfred to inform him on whom his suspicions had fallen. He persisted in saying, that nothing should ever induce him until he had proofs; of which he did not despair, when once his health was re-established.

“Your refusal afflicts me the more,”

said Mr. Growell, "as I hoped to draw from your suggestions some instructions relative to the measures that we ought to take respecting a lady, who is so deservedly dear to us all. This is the moment, my dear Alfred, to exhibit the courage that you possess in such an eminent degree."

"My God!" exclaimed Alfred, and he turned pale as he spoke, "what are you going to announce to me?"

"Most dreadful intelligence!—Lady Milborn was, without doubt, torn from her daughter's presence; and, notwithstanding all that has yet been done, it is impossible to obtain any tidings of her fate."

Alfred was horror-struck, and remained silent for some minutes; but soon rage and despair so totally absorbed his faculties, that he started up in his bed, and swore that nothing should prevent him from going imme-

diately in search of his mother. Mr. Growell met with every opposition in endeavouring to make him hear reason. "Wait," said he, "the arrival of your father, who will be here to-morrow, or the day after at the farthest; your cure will be then more perfect, and you will be better able to support the fatigues that may attend such inquiries. I hope to accompany you; for, be assured, my young friend, that neither distance nor danger can alarm me, so long as I entertain the fond hope of restoring a tender mother to her children, and a virtuous and amiable wife to her husband."

Alfred submitted at length to the prayers of friendship; and Mr. Growell thought it necessary to inform him, that Harriot, who had been extremely ill, was fast recovering.—"Her perilous situation," said he, "is the cause of our being still kept in ignorance re-

specting her mother. The surgeon has requested our patience for four-and-twenty hours longer; at the end of which he assures us, we may question her with safety."

How dreadful were these tidings to the mind of Alfred!—While he thought himself reposing in the calm of serenity, fate had deprived him of the best of mothers; and he was on the eve, perhaps, of losing the most beloved of sisters.

Feeling more than ever his obligations to Mr. Growell, he knew not in what manner to demonstrate the excess of his gratitude. His friend entreated him to attend only to his own recovery. Alfred insisted upon his taking both refreshment and repose; of which he must have been greatly in need, not having been undressed for three nights, and having only slumbered upon a couch, about two hours, in the day.

He consented to pass that night at Sumptuous Castle, where he had some necessary directions to give.

Clara, being left by her mother at Milborn-Hall, prevailed upon Ancelina to go to bed, as she was determined to sit up that night with Harriot, herself. She had the satisfaction to witness that she passed the whole of it in a state of the utmost tranquillity. On awaking, she found herself so well, that she gave Clara an account of all that she knew of the horrid transaction. When she described to Miss Growell the dreadful situation in which the villains had placed both her mother and herself, their tears flowed mutually. “And yet,” said Harriot, assuming a more composed air, “we ought to console ourselves, since my mother has written, and promised that she will be here immediately.”

“Certainly,” replied Clara, whose

agitation almost led her to betray the secret that it was thought still advisable to keep from Miss Milborn.

“But when I reflect on the state in which we were left, I cannot suppress my indignation and my grief.”

“My poor friend, how much you must have suffered!—But tell me, Harriot, did not one of those wretches remain with you?”

“But for the interposition of Alfred and your excellent father, I must have been inevitably lost.”

“How fortunate has my father been, in having had it so frequently in his power to render himself serviceable to your family!”

“We ought, indeed, to be grateful to him. Oh, Clara! how few such friends are to be found!”

“And there are few, likewise, so worthy of being beloved as you all are!”

While they were thus conversing, the hour arrived when the surgeon was to visit his patient. He came in, accompanied by Ancelina. Both perceived, on their entrance, that Harriot would not much longer require his care. Clara took Ancelina by the hand, and led her out of the room, observing that they had better leave the surgeon alone with the invalid. Clara then informed her friend of all that Harriot had said to her. Ancelina burst into tears. She had been hitherto only in doubt; her mother's absence caused her the most poignant affliction; but to learn that she had been carried off by barbarians, who had probably destroyed her by assassination, distracted the heart and mind of her amiable and affectionate daughter.

Harriot was permitted to rise. She asked to go to her brother, but the surgeon opposed it. Alfred was likewise

able to leave his bed. His impatience to fly to his mother's assistance was so far from being hurtful to him, that it seemed to contribute towards his recovery. He expressed the same wish as Harriot; but the surgeon again interposed his authority, and obliged him to continue in his chamber.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell did not come on that day to Milborn-Hall; but they sent inquiries twice. At ten the next morning, the arrival of a carriage was heard. It was Lord Milborn and Godwin who were returned. Grief and suspense hung upon every countenance. His lordship's first question was, whether Lady Milborn had been heard of. —He was no sooner replied to in the negative, than he raised his eyes to heaven, and stood the silent image of despair. As he was going to his son's apartment, Mr. Growell dismounted from his horse, and ran to welcome

him. The two friends cordially shook hands, but neither could utter a word. They went up stairs; Alfred, who fell upon his knees before his father, swore to him that he would never know rest until he had found his mother. Lord Milborn receiving his promise, repeated it himself; and that, too, from the very bottom of his soul. Alfred was up, and accompanied his father to Harriot's apartment. She had been very near relapsing into the dangerous state from which she had just risen. Mrs. Growell, who had arrived at Milborn-Hall before Lord Milborn, fearing that Harriot might become suddenly informed, that, instead of expecting her mother, they were ignorant of her fate, thought it most advisable to break it to her by degrees, and with the utmost caution. Yet, notwithstanding all the feeling and delicacy that Mrs. Growell made use of, Harriot dropped down,

senseless; and was in that state when her father entered her room. The cruel sight drew a shriek of agony from Lord Milborn, that brought in Alfred and Mr. Growell, who were waiting on the outside of the door, for permission to enter. After some time, Harriot came to herself. On opening her eyes, she beheld her father, who, tenderly bending over her, was waiting with extreme anxiety for the moment of her knowing him. As soon as she did so, she fell upon his neck, and asked him for her mother.

“She shall be restored to us,” said Alfred, when pressing his sister’s hand to his lips, “if she were even buried in the bowels of the earth. I am going to set out, and will never return without that beloved mother, who is so worthy to be such.”

The air of confidence with which Alfred spoke, was consoling to the two

sisters, who embraced each other with tears. It was determined that, on the following day, Lord Milborn, Alfred, Godwin, and Mr. Growell, should begin their journeys, each taking a different road; and that they should go at least twenty miles round the country, collecting every information, and pursuing every track that seemed in the least likely to aid their discovery.

CHAP. XIII.

It is necessary, towards the interest of this history, that I should send back the reader to the fatal night of those mysterious events, the forcing away of Lady Milborn, and the violence attempted against Alfred's life and Harriot's honour. He knows by what means the two latter escaped their threatening destiny; the fate of her ladyship should also inspire as much interest, or, at least, curiosity.

Of the four villains who had attacked the mother and daughter, two remained with Harriot, while their companions were conveying Lady Milborn across

the wood, where a carriage was waiting for them in the most retired spot. They placed her in it, by the side of a woman whom she had never before seen, and who behaved to her respectfully.

The journey lasted about three hours; the two men, who had taken off their masks, got up behind the carriage, fearing, perhaps, she might be tempted to cry out. They had left the gag in her mouth, and her arms were still tied. It was very dark when the horses stopped. As soon as the coach door was opened, Lady Milborn was desired by the woman who accompanied her, to alight. Not finding any likelihood of gaining relief from resistance, she thought that the only way to mitigate her deplorable situation, was to appear to be resigned. Thus resolved, she arose from the seat. The two men assisted her out, the woman following them.

They entered a sort of vestibule, extremely large, and remarkably lofty. They there untied her arms, and took away the gag, which had nearly stifled her. She cast her eyes around; on one side she beheld a large folding-door, half open; it conducted to a room, which appeared to be as destitute of furniture as the place they were in. On the other side was a large stone staircase, whose peculiar structure declared its antiquity. One of the men went into the adjoining room, and, on his voice being heard, a feeble, tottering light was seen coming towards them; it was carried by an old man of terrifying countenance. He received orders to proceed, and directed his steps towards the stairs, when Lady Milborn, without being desired, instinctively followed. The two men and the woman walked behind her. Having ascended the first story, the old man

turned upon the right, and went through a long and narrow passage, at the end of which was a second staircase, not nearly so wide as the first. From this second story, the conductor pursued the same way to gain a third staircase; which was so extremely narrow, that a large person would have found some difficulty to pass. The steps were so steep and so high, that they were both difficult and dangerous to ascend; and Lady Milborn, already exhausted by fatigue, found no small difficulty in gaining their end. The old man opened a door, and showed them into a room, the floor of which was covered with dust. It seemed as if they had hastily carried there a wretched bed and table, two chairs, the bottoms of which were composed of rags, together with a few other miserable articles, that were necessary. Lady Milborn had not uttered a single word since she had fallen

into the power of that gang of villains; neither had any one addressed her. The silence was at length terminated by the woman who came with her.

“There, my lady,” said she, “that is the apartment destined for you. My father,” pointing to the old man, “and myself, shall remain in the house, to procure whatever you may want, and, in a few minutes, I will bring you some refreshment.”

During this harangue, the father lit a small fire; it was at the season when the nights are growing cold; he placed a candle on the chimney-piece, and they all withdrew.

Lady Milborn, thoroughly convinced that the most reasonable arguments would be incapable of producing any favourable change upon the hearts of people vile enough to lend their assistance to such a scandalous outrage as that which had deprived her of her li-

berty, thought it beneath her dignity to interrogate her jailors; it was more worthy of herself to demonstrate her contempt of them, by her silence. As soon, however, as she found herself alone, the weakness common to her sex prevailed, and her tears flowed abundantly. Alas! they were shed, less for herself than for her dear Harriot. As they were bearing her away from her daughter, she perceived that the tall man who came with the woman, held her unfortunate girl in his arms.... A thousand ideas, each increasing in horror, presented themselves successively to her mind. At one moment she suspected that the monster, who was covered by a mask, might be Evan; but, in that case, why should he have taken *her* away?---It would have been more natural to him to have taken Harriot; besides, how was it possible to imagine that the son of the best people upon

earth, and their dearest friends, should be capable of such an atrocity?---Evan, it was true, loved her daughter passionately, and was rejected by her ; but disappointed love does not always lead to guilt ; who then could be the author of that dreadful adventure?---She did not know that she had a single enemy in the world. The sad events that had happened to her lord within the last two or three years, came to her recollection. Those who had so barbarously mangled him in the same wood wherein she had been seized, were not thieves, for they took neither his money nor his watch. They could only then be assassins, placed there by some very wicked people. She then thought of the bond, upon which appeared the false but resembling signature of her lord. What springs seemed to be set at work to accomplish their destruction ! These calamities all arose, doubtless, from the

same source; and persons existed who had determined their utter ruin. What, she thought, would become of her husband, when, on his return from London, he should be informed of the disasters that had befallen his unfortunate family during his absence?---The loss of his wife and of his daughter, for Lady Milborn could not suppose that Harriot had escaped the hands of the ravishers, would overwhelm him in despair!---She pictured to herself the grief of Alfred and Ancelina, when they saw the carriage return empty; and when the night should pass away, without their seeing either the mother or the daughter.

“Their first thought,” said she, “will be to fly to Sumptuous Castle; and there they will excite anxiety and sorrow. Mr. and Mrs. Growell, themselves inconsolable, will only add to their affliction. Why, oh why,” she ex-

claimed loudly in an agony of grief, "am I not the only one to suffer?---- The miseries of those who are dear to me are far more afflictive to my heart than is my own wretched situation!"

These melancholy reflections were interrupted by the sound of some one coming up stairs. The key was placed in the door, and turned several times. She listened in apprehension and anxiety. The old man and his daughter came in; they brought some provisions, which they placed upon the table; departed without speaking, and cautiously double-locked the door.

The night was already far spent, Lady Milborn threw herself upon the bed, without taking off her clothes, and slept until eight in the morning. When she awoke, all the horrors of the evening overpowered her mind, and the tears, that fell in torrents down her cheeks, gave a little ease to her deeply-wounded heart.

The woman brought her breakfast. Despair suggested to her to refuse every thing that could tend to prolong her wretched existence; but reason held out another language. It represented to her, that as she had committed no crime, she ought to place confidence in a just and good God, who surely meant only to try her patience and resignation. She did not, therefore, refuse such nourishment as might support her resolution and her strength. Her attendant inquired whether she had slept well; her answer was very short. A single "Yes" put an end to the conversation.

The provisions that were given her were neither delicate nor well dressed, but they could not injure her constitution, for they were chiefly composed of vegetables and milk.

Lady Milbern, in examining her chamber, had no idea of discovering

the means to escape ; her extreme *en-bonpoint* precluded any attempt of that kind. She looked over every part of it, for amusement only ; and that she might beguile for a few moments the anguish that corroded her heart. The room had only one door and one window. The latter was secured by iron bars, and overlooked a charming country. The most beautiful scenery expanded itself as far as the eye could reach. Her residence was so elevated, that every object she beheld appeared to be diminished. In vain did she look towards the east ; it was not possible for her to discover in what part of the country she was thus entombed alive. But it was easy for her to reckon upon the distance that separated her from Milborn-Hall ; three hours journey, and four trotting hours, must have conveyed her about fourteen or fifteen miles ; but what direction had they taken ?—She

knew the owners of almost every seat within twenty miles of her own, and nothing like her present habitation had ever, as she thought, met her eyes. Having, however, arrived there at night, she could scarcely be said to have seen the house. Was it an ancient abbey?—What led her to think so, was, that on crossing the first stair-case to arrive at the second, she thought she perceived a great number of doors, that led into the corridor, which might have been formerly the dormitory of the friars; and, if her idea was just, the place where she was must be Wooded Priory, a very old convent, almost wholly destroyed, and not for many years inhabited. She had often heard it mentioned, in consequence of a very particular circumstance that attended it.

It was reported, that in the court of that priory was a well, of which the water had the flavour of orange flowers.

It was likewise affirmed, that it had the same odour, which it never lost, either from boiling or preserving. Lady Milborn, wishing to try, ran to the bottle which stood upon the table, and sipped of the water two or three times; but it possessed only the usual quality, that of having no taste whatever. A conviction, however, one way or the other, could not possibly effect any change in her dismal situation: from whatever place she was in, her friends could not release her, for they knew not where to find her. It became then of little consequence whether she was at Wooded Priory, or elsewhere.

A month passed away, without producing any other alteration in her than their having brought her both linen and books. She received whatever was given to her; but she never made a demand, and seldom replied to the questions put to her by her jailors.

She was one night awakened by the noise made in unlocking her door. Astonished that any one should disturb her in the dead of the night, she conceived dreadful apprehensions; and, inspired by natural instinct, and the powerful interference of her guardian angel, she jumped out of bed, and ran to the chimney-piece, where she recollected leaving a knife; which, having seized, she again darted into bed.

CHAP. XIV.

GODWIN was the first who returned to Milborn-Hall; but his presence was productive only of fresh affliction. He would have employed, perhaps, more perseverance, had not his impatience to see Clara, in some measure, relaxed his zeal. The inutility of those long and fatiguing journeys had begun to discourage the fond hopes that had been raised by Harriot and Ancelina. They passed their whole time in watching the arrival of those, whom they trusted to find the messengers of comfort, in restoring to them their excellent mother.

Godwin only allowed himself time to

inform his sisters of his disappointment, and hastened to Sumptuous Castle upon the pinions of love. He found Mrs. Growell at home, with her two daughters. They were all anxious to learn the success of his enterprise, and his reply produced nothing but tears. Mrs. Growell expatiated, in the most affecting manner, upon her own grief, for the loss of her friend.

Clara, who felt that every affliction of the Misses Milborn became equally her own, requested her mother's permission to go immediately to the Hall.

"I was just going to propose it to you," said Mrs. Growell; "go, my dear, and endeavour to administer consolation to the hearts so cruelly torn. Why cannot I, at the price of my blood, restore to that unfortunate family, the happiness of which it was in such full possession when we first came here?"

Godwin wished to accompany Clara,

but her mother would not consent to it.—“Aurea,” said she, “remains here, and it would not be proper for my daughter to go alone with a young man. While Clara is upon a visit to your sisters, I shall be glad of your company here. I shall be a gainer by it, and propriety will not be offended.”

This arrangement mightily displeased Godwin; but not knowing in what manner to oppose, he subscribed to it, though with rage in his heart. In conducting Clara to the carriage, he entreated her to shorten her visit, and to return to Sumptuous Castle as soon as possible. She promised to do so, and he returned to Mrs. Growell, in the worst imaginable temper.

Clara was but just gone, when Evan entered the room. He seemed surprised on seeing Godwin; but, as he did not hate him quite so much as he did Alfred, he spoke to him amicably, and in-

quired whether he had received any intelligence of Lady Milborn.

“My God, no!”—said Mrs. Growell; “the poor boy is come back exactly as he went. I greatly fear that the other three will not be more fortunate. Those who have committed this abominable deed have certainly an interest in separating Lady Milborn from her family; and will, in that case, take her to a considerable distance.”

Godwin sighed, and Evan said nothing more.

Clara, in order to fulfil the promise made to her lover, staid but a short time with her friends; she thus stole the hours from friendship, in order to consecrate them to love. Godwin, who heard the carriage arrive, ran to give Miss Growell his hand, and, tenderly pressing hers, thanked her for her kind compliance. Clara’s eyes were red with weeping; the heavy affliction un-

der which Ancelina and Harriot suffered was not of a nature to admit of consolation. Clara could do nothing but lament with them, and mingle her tears with theirs.

Mr. Growell's return, which took place five days after that of Godwin's brought but little more relief. All that he had heard, amounted to nothing more than that a coach, with six horses, in which were three women, one of whom was to all appearance in deep distress, had been seen at midnight, twelve miles from Milborn-Hall, on the same evening that Lady Milborn disappeared, as he had remarked from the dates that had been taken. That carriage was upon the Gloucester road; one of the wheels met with an accident, which happened three miles from Fairford; in consequence of which, they found themselves under the necessity of sending thither for another coach. As

soon as it arrived, two of the ladies placed in it the third; the people who gave this information to Mr. Growell, observed, that they should have supposed her to be dead, had she not now and then uttered a feeble cry. Mr. Growell went on, he said, to Fairford, and stopped at an inn, which happened to be precisely the same to which they had sent for another carriage; but there all intelligence ceased. The ladies had slept there, but, early the next morning, a carriage came to take them away.

“Poor Lady Milborn!” said Mrs. Growell, as soon as her husband had done speaking, “our hopes are, then, partly destroyed. Heaven grant that her husband and her son may announce something more satisfactory!”

“I hope so, too,” replied Mr. Growell; “but I confess that I am no longer sanguine.”

“Do you think, papa,” said Clara,

“that she was one of the ladies they mentioned to you?”

“I do not know what to think. The answers given to my questions respecting the age and the person of the one who seemed to be in distress, agreed but little with those of our friend; nothing can be therefore less certain than to identify her by those means. “Now,” continued Mr. Growell, “as I have satisfied your curiosity respecting Lady Milborn, I will inform you, Mrs. Growell, of a circumstance that particularly concerns ourselves. I found on my return, that I was but at a trifling distance from Twilight House; and I wished, consequently, to pay a visit to Mr. Modbury, to whom you know, my dear, I had to deliver several bales of goods, upon my arrival in England. He received me very handsomely, and is a very amiable man, in the possession of a very splendid estate. His wife died

about eighteen months since ; and has left only one son, who will be immensely rich ; the young man is not wholly unknown to us. He was, like ourselves, at Mr. Evesham's ball last year. He is perfectly well educated ; has a fine open countenance, and is just come of age, which has put him into possession of his mother's property, amounting to fifteen thousand pounds. He has besides received a legacy, left him by an aunt, of eight thousand ; in addition to which, if he marries with his father's consent, he is to receive forty thousand pounds more. When his father introduced him to me, he appeared to experience a sensation of pleasure.—“ I have long,” said he, “ had the honour of knowing Mr. Growell by name ; and you, Sir, have frequently expressed a wish to know the cause of the melancholy that has lately, you say, obscured my features. This is the moment to inform you

of it. To see, and to adore Mr. Growell's daughter, has been, to me, one and the same thing."

"Why did you not tell me so, my dear George?—Is it then necessary to die for love, when it is so sweet to live for it?"

"What could I do, Sir? I heard that a young gentleman, one of Miss Growell's neighbours, and the son of her father's most intimate friend, not only paid his addresses to her, but that a marriage between them was actually fixed upon."

"You were deceived, my dear Sir," said Mr. Growell; "my daughter Clara never formed any engagement."

"If that is the case," replied Mr. Modbury, "I wish that she would form one now with my son. He would make an excellent husband, and we should all be rejoiced."

In pronouncing those words, he held out his hand, which I shook cordially.

“Be it so,” I returned: “My Clara shall not impoverish your family. It was my intention to give her ten thousand pounds; I shall double it, in consequence of your alliance. It is impossible to pay too much for being related to worthy people.—Now, Clara, you have heard what I had to say; in two days both the father and son will be here. I have no apprehension of meeting with any obstacle on your side; but if you have the most distant idea of opposing my wishes, I desire, at least, that you will not suffer it to be seen.”

Clara had been, during this whole conversation, sufficiently mistress of herself, to conceal the emotion which her father’s discourse had occasioned. She was equally so when he forbade

her from letting her sentiments be known, should they prove contrary to his inclination. She arose slowly from her seat, and quitted the room, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Growell astonished by her ready obedience. They were, however, greatly mistaken as to her intentions. I have already said, that she possessed great firmness of mind. She revolted at every injustice, and nothing could appear to her more cruel and intolerable, than the way that her father had disposed of her, without even caring whether the terms, upon which depended her future happiness or misery, were acceptable to her. Had grief been depicted, or tenderness used, possibly she might have been gained over; but the imperious tone of voice in which Mr. Growell had explained himself, was so far from determining her to obey him, that it had awakened both her

pride and her resentment. She retired to her chamber, and wrote the following lines:

“ My father is to introduce to me a lover, to whom he has promised my hand. He will be here in two days, but he shall not find me at Sumptuous Castle. Settle, if it be possible, every thing in four and twenty hours, that we may undertake the journey which you seem to have so much at heart, and which I now equally desire as yourself. Have a post-chaise in readiness to-morrow night, at eleven o'clock, at the little gate on the left of the road. I shall dine at Milborn-Hall, and most likely my father will accompany me. Don't pay much attention to me; but you can make me a sign that will explain whether it can take place at the time I propose. It is painful to me to leave your sisters in their present state of affliction; but they are attached to me, and

will do me justice enough not to place to the score of indifference, that which is become necessary by the urgency of circumstances."

She sent the note to Godwin on the same evening, by the gardener's son, to whom she confided it.

Her father went with her, as she had predicted, to Milborn-Hall; and Godwin came, according to his custom, to hand her in. Joy sparkled in his eyes, and, as they ascended the steps, he said to her, in a low voice, "Every thing will be ready."

The grief of Harriot and Ancelina was already so violent, that it was scarcely possible for any thing to add to it; the certainty, therefore, of Mr. Growell's not having been more successful than Godwin, did not seem to render them more miserable; they had, besides, erected their warmest and most sanguine hopes upon researches making by

Lord Milborn and Alfred; but if these two should likewise return without their mother, their cause must be hopeless indeed!

Mr. Growell, as much devoted as ever to the service of his friend, resolved, he said, to make another trial, as soon as he had witnessed the termination of an event, which was to take place in his own family. Clara and Godwin were perfectly apprised of the nature of that event, and they inwardly resolved it should never take place.

Every thing having seconded their intention, Mr. Growell and his daughter departed at the usual hour.

Clara had already written a letter to Ancelina, which she had sent by the first post. She entreated her pardon, for having declined to take leave of her and of the dear Harriot; and likewise apologised for the veil of mystery that she had thrown over her con-

duct, respecting the long attachment she had felt for their brother. She concluded by assuring them, that her silence had originated only in the fear of adding to their unhappiness. Alas! were they not already sufficiently bowed down by affliction?—Would it not be, therefore, cruel in the extreme, to add to the load of calamity?—She finished by the assurance, that she would write to them again, immediately after becoming one of their family.

As soon as Clara's absence was discovered at Sumptuous Castle, all was in the utmost confusion. Mr. Growell threw himself into the most outrageous passion, and swore that he would sacrifice his daughter to her ravisher. He sent immediately to Milborn-Hall, and the intelligence of Godwin's departure, who had left word that he was going to London, confirmed every suspicion that he had formed. Evan gloried in

the curses that his father ceased not to vent. That unnatural brother himself proposed to go in pursuit of his sister, promising to bring her home, living or dead. His father consented to whatever he wished; and Evan, after having ordered one of the swiftest horses in the stable to be got in readiness, galloped, full speed, to attain the road to Scotland. Poor Aurea, trembling at her father's violence, and terrified lest Evan should overtake her sister, sat crying piteously in a corner of the room. Mrs. Growell partook of her husband's indignation, and implored him to make use of the utmost rigour, should Evan be fortunate enough to come up with the fugitive, before she became united to her lover.

Such was the situation of their minds at Sumptuous Castle, when the arrival of Mr. Modbury and his son added to the general commotion. It was impos-

sible to conceal from them the fatal intelligence. The father pitied Mr. Growell; and the son deplored his own misfortune, for he was really attached to Harriot.

Delicacy did not allow of their remaining any longer in a house where their presence must necessarily aggravate the fault that Miss Clara had committed. They went away, requesting that Mr. Growell would favour them with the earliest information, whenever he should receive more pleasant tidings.

CHAP. XV.

LADY MILBORN, whom we left in bed, grasped firmly her knife, and became still more alarmed, when she perceived that a woman in a mask entered her chamber, whom she recollected, both from her dress and appearance, to be the same who had presided over the remainder of the gang, at the time that she was forced from the wood. She held a lantern in her hand, and was followed by a man, whose appearance proclaimed him to be a tool in the hands of infamy. His clothing was in tatters, and, from the colour of his hands and face, he seemed to be either a coal-heaver or a blacksmith.

Lady Milborn started up in her bed,

and inquired into the nature of their commission. They did not, however, condescend to reply; but the masked female placed her lantern upon the table, and, sitting down quietly, looked at the man, and pointed to Lady Milborn.

“Rupert,” said she, in an evidently-feigned voice, “there is the woman whom you are to dishonour before my eyes; and here,” continued she, showing him a purse, “is the reward of your obedience.” The wretch looked with savage joy upon the two objects held out to him, and ran to the bed, in which sat shuddering the bewildered Lady Milborn.

“Retire!” said she, in a voice that would have awed vice into silence, “retire, vile agent of the most execrable of creatures!—Dread the vengeance of heaven! it will not, cannot suffer such horrible deeds to go unpunished.”

The wretch, apparently struck by such

dreadful conviction, retreated a few paces; so true is the observation, that virtue will awe even the most abandoned.

“Rupert!” vociferated the female fiend, “is it thus you fulfil your promise?—Do you forget that there are a hundred guineas in this purse?”

The latter words triumphed over the momentary remorse that Rupert was beginning to feel. He drew close to Lady Milborn, and attempting to lay hold of her—“Approach not!” she said, “or instant death shall.” But he was deaf to every thing save the will of his savage employer. Lady Milborn, finding that all remonstrance was vain, and that the last moment was come, instantaneously plunged the knife into his breast, and he fell speechless by the side of the bed. Not even the blood that gushed from his wound seemed to make any impression upon the mind of his conductress. She arose, and left the

room without speaking, taking with her the only light that faintly illumined this scene of horror.

Dreadful was Lady Milborn's situation, upon finding herself alone, and in the dark, with a man who was evidently groaning out his last!—Although his punishment was just, she could not without horror contemplate upon the action she had committed. Her senses were in wild disorder; she knew not whether to wish for, or to dread the coming light. It would present to her aching view the dreadful spectacle of an expiring sinner, murdered by her hand. The day at length began to dawn; in vain did she endeavour to hide herself beneath the bed-clothes; an invincible power irresistibly attracted her to gaze upon the victim of his own matchless atrocity. She at once felt a sentiment of horror and of pity: his blood no longer flowed; but it ran in streams

about the room, and Lady Milborn's clothes, that had fallen, in the confusion, from the bed, were drenched in it. It was not possible for death to render him more hideous than he had appeared to Lady Milborn, when he approached her to execute the infamous orders he had received. He wore the livery of the most abject poverty, and was in every respect an object that was really horrible to look upon.

“Unhappy man!” said Lady Milborn, while she shed the tears of commiseration, “how could you suppose that the road which conducts to guilt should ever lead to fortune?”

About ten in the morning, the old man came in with her breakfast. He seemed neither surprised nor affected by what he beheld. The masked female fiend having doubtless informed him of it. He made no ceremony of kicking the corpse, that lay between him

and the table, on one side ; then turning towards the bed, from which Lady Milborn had not dared to stir, he said to her, smiling, “ Why you have made a pretty figure here of poor Rupert !— If I had been in his place, I would not lie there, as he does now. The fool would not believe me ; I told him to take care what he was about. Women that are like you, so proud of their virtue, are more to be dreaded than ten men. If they’ve no strength, they’ve got cunning. My daughter is coming to help me to carry away the ugly carcase, and in the mean time you had better eat your breakfast.”

At that moment his daughter came in ; she looked pale and terrified, and desired that her father would follow her immediately. He did so, and they both forgot to shut the door. Lady Milborn noticed this extraordinary omission, but augured from it no favourable hope, as

she was persuaded that one or both of them would return speedily. After having waited a full hour with the utmost impatience, being extremely desirous that they should take away the corpse, she resolved to throw the counterpane over it, that her eyes might be no longer so dreadfully disgusted, and, with that intent, she arose. But there was another distressing circumstance. Her gown was stained with blood, and she had not any other, she found herself, therefore, compelled to put it on. She had scarcely finished that dismal office, when the sound of military music roused her attention. She ran to the window, but saw nothing of it. The sound, however, drew nearer. It suddenly ceased, and was succeeded by the beating of drums. She was extremely surprised by such a novelty, and the absence of her jailors seemed to announce some wonderful event. The door was, as they had left

it, half open, and she determined on leaving the room. As she descended the first staircase, she trembled violently, but, not meeting with any opposition, she acquired courage, and soon arrived at the bottom of those difficult stairs, when she recollected that, before she came to the others, she had to go through a long and narrow corridor. After much difficulty, she succeeded. As soon as she came to the bottom, she heard the confused noise of several voices. Fear had almost tempted her return, when reflecting that her situation could not be worse than it had hitherto been, she recovered her spirits, and ran quickly down the large, and first staircase. It is impossible to conceive her astonishment and confusion, upon finding herself in the midst of a detachment of soldiers, who had taken possession of the hall. The sight of a woman whose garments were spotted

with blood, appalled the first who perceived her.---“Where can this woman come from?” said one of the men, while he rudely seized her by the arm;---“speak!---do you belong to the gang of thieves that we are putting to the rout?”

Poor Lady Milborn, more dead than alive, fell upon her knees, and implored their pity and protection.

“No pity for people of your class; speak---who are you?”

“Alas! you are greatly mistaken, respecting me. I do not deserve the epithets you give me—I am Lord Milborn’s wife. Vile wretches, whom I know nothing of, laid violent hands upon me, in a wood near my own house. They dragged me hither, where I have languished above two months, and my family knows not where I am. It is too true that I was last night compelled to

stab a man; I did it in my own defence, to save me from dishonour."

The air of candour and seeming truth with which Lady Milborn uttered these words, disarmed the honest soldier's anger, who was respectfully raising her from the ground, when his commanding officer appeared. He had been listening to Lady Milborn's pathetic and interesting narrative. He advanced towards her.

"Lady Milborn, Madam, did you not say?—Lady Milborn!—Have you not, Madam, a son?"

"Sir, I have two."

"I was perfectly well acquainted with an Alfred Milborn: we were at the same school together."

"At Westminster?"

"Exactly so."

"He is my eldest."

"Your ladyship then is the mother

of a very charming young man ; and I wish, Madam, to know, in what manner I can have the honour of being serviceable to you on the the present occasion."

"Do you know, Sir, at what distance we are from Milborn-Hall?"

"I do, my Lady," said a soldier, as he advanced towards her. "This place, my lady, is Wooded Priory. It is more than fifty years since it has been inhabited. Its last owner, who was uncle to the gentleman to whom it now belongs, lost, within one year, his wife and seven children. He became convinced that there was a fatality belonging it; he left it, and made a vow that he would never more set foot in it. He left also in his will, that his future heirs were to do the same. I am forty years old, and, to any knowledge, no one has ever lived in it since. It is

eighteen miles from this to Milborn-Hall."

Lady Milborn inquired of the officer, how it would be possible for her to procure a carriage to go home.

"Nothing, Madam, can be easier. I will send this man, who is acquainted with the country, in search of one. In the mean time, I beseech you, compose your agitated mind, under the assurance that no danger can possibly await you, while you are surrounded by *us*."

He then informed her of their being sent to extirpate a band of robbers, which infested the country; and that they had only made a halt at Wooded Priory.

They repaired to the chamber wherein Lady Milborn had been confined, but none of the men would undertake to bury the corpse, which was still lying on the floor. The officer commended

their conduct. "Those," said he, "who made this fellow the instrument of their crime, will most likely return to find him, and the sight of him may excite in them some remorse."

Lady Milborn, greatly recovered, accepted the invitation of the officers belonging the company, and partook of their dinner. The villains had not stripped her of her purse. She distributed twenty guineas among the men, and reserved only two, to enable her to proceed to Milborn-Hall.

CHAP. XVI.

NOTWITHSTANDING all Evan's alacrity, he arrived at Gretna-Green only to be informed that Godwin and Clara were united, but were no longer there; and this vexatious intelligence was all he gained by his journey.

Mr. Growell was prudent enough to conceal the chagrin he endured from the disappointment of his hopes; the mischief was done, and it was become necessary to assume the appearance, at least, of being resigned to it. He resolved, however, never to devote a shilling to their use, should they and their progeny perish of hunger in the street.

Harriot and Ancelina were very far from approving of Clara's conduct, and they extended their resentment to Godwin, whom they reproached for having taken advantage of the tenderness that Mr. Growell's daughter felt for him, by engaging her to fly the paternal roof. They were under apprehension that it would create a coolness towards themselves, on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Growell. They would have done their neighbours more justice, had they known them better.

More than three weeks had elapsed since the departure of Lord Milborn and his son, yet no tidings had been received of either, and their long absence and silence added to the alarming fears under which the family already laboured, lest they should likewise have fallen victims to the malice of their enemies; and, should it be so, what was

to become of the two unfortunate inhabitants of Milborn-Hall?

The same language was held by Mr. and Mrs. Growell, in their neighbourhood. Mrs. Growell assured every one, that in the event of so terrible a disaster, she would immediately adopt the two daughters of her friends. That noble and generous resolution excited universal admiration; the praises of the nabob and his wife were re-echoed by every tongue: but Evan was not included in the honourable opinion entertained of his parents. He was universally abhorred, and for reasons very obvious. He had innumerable vices, without a single good quality. Insolent to his inferiors, he was abject and servile to those whom rank had placed above him: brutal, malicious, and vindictive, he was the terror of the servants; a libertine systematically, but without discrimination, he used neither

delicacy nor preference in gratifying his inclinations. His violent love for Harriot had been superseded by the most implacable hatred, and he longed to do her every possible injury. He was by no means deficient in what is falsely termed bravery; he carried it to the utmost pitch of ferocity; for, if he exposed himself to the attack of an adversary, he enjoyed a glorious satisfaction in plunging his steel into his breast, and exulted as the life-blood flowed warm from his heart.

After more than a month's absence on one side, and grief and anxiety on the other, Lord Milborn and his son returned to the hall. They had traversed the country above one hundred and twenty miles. They did not return together, but on the same day, and within a few hours of each other. The air of melancholy that overspread the countenance of each, sufficiently

proclaimed there was nothing left to hope for. As soon as Lord Milborn had embraced his daughters, and learned the ill success of his friend, and of Godwin, he retired to his chamber, and gave orders that no person should interrupt him. The arrival of his eldest son, soon after, occasioned him, however, to show himself again to his family.

“Alfred, too, is like myself, returned alone, and our fate is decreed!”

He held out his hand to his son, and again returned to his chamber, forbidding, as before, that any one should molest him. Alfred threw himself into the arms of his two sisters, and the tears of natural affection were duly shed.

“We have for ever lost her!” said Harriot, as she sobbed aloud.

“I dare not form a decision,” replied Alfred; “but it appears to me

that we must rely on Providence alone."

Dinner was announced, but no one attended to it; the despair that wrung every heart in the family, had strongly impressed the weeping attendants. Their sorrowful pleasure consisted in talking over the virtues of their lamented lady, and the keenest regret followed every heart-felt encomium.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell were no sooner informed of the return of Lord Milborn and of Alfred, than they hastened to Milborn-Hall. The tender friendship that united the two families, would not allow of their waiting for Lord Milborn's first visit. Nothing could equal their anxiety to learn whether Lady Milborn was likely to be restored to the universal prayer. They both repaired to Lord Milborn's apartment, and found him absorbed in deep reflection. Mr. Growell flew towards him.

“Well, my dear lord!”—

“You must perceive my distracted state of mind; and may judge by it that nothing but death can put an end to my misery.”

“Cruel friend!”—said Mrs. Growell, while affection and pity beamed upon her countenance;—“have you, then, none left to interest your feelings?—Are your children, are your friends, only objects of indifference?”—

“Forgive me, dearest Mrs. Growell; be assured that I am fully sensible of the value of your attachment to myself and my family; but to be deprived, and no doubt for ever, of the inestimable woman who has hitherto formed the whole happiness of my life, is an extent of wretchedness that I feel I can never survive. My heart is so deeply wounded, that it must inevitably break.”

“Your piteous complaint,” said Mrs. Growell, “is, alas! so justly founded,

that I cannot blame you for it; but I trust that it will prove premature, and that you are not for ever separated from your most amiable wife. I dare to flatter myself that you will be reunited, and that your happiest days are yet to come!"

The inhabitants of Sumptuous Castle, after having passed two melancholy hours at the Hall, returned home, leaving Lord Milborn somewhat less agitated. The sort of prediction which had been uttered by Mrs. Growell had awakened a gleam of hope in his breast. The unhappy are like children: a trifle will sometimes subdue their most poignant affliction.

In a few days, Lord Milborn went to pay a visit at Sumptuous Castle. It was the first since his misfortune. He had been informed of the flight of Godwin with Clara, and had no intention of soliciting for them Mr. Growell's

forgiveness, for he thought his son unworthy of it, and wished to convince his friends of his own entire disapprobation. Mr. Growell could not, upon that occasion, command his temper. He vented a thousand curses upon his daughter, and reiterated the oath that he had already taken, entirely to renounce both her and her husband, and never to render them the smallest assistance, should they be in future exposed to all the horrors of want.

Lord Milborn was astonished and shocked at the excess of rage that he witnessed in his friend; he had never supposed him to be capable of so much hatred, and especially towards one of his own children; but when he reflected that Clara, by her conduct, had placed an insurmountable barrier to the accomplishment of a project in which her father's honour and peace were connected, he almost ceased to

wonder at the violence of his resentment.—Lord Milborn, not having Mr. Growell's reasons for being thus inexorable, resolved to assist the giddy creatures, both of whom he loved, notwithstanding their almost inexcusable fault.

Mrs. Growell, perceiving how sensibly Lord Milborn was affected by the bitter expressions made use of by her husband, endeavoured to change the subject of conversation; and was on the point of succeeding, when a violent clamour was heard in the court. A man, who had entered it on horseback, full speed, was waving his hat in the air, crying out as loud as he could, "My lady is found!—My lady is found! —Blessed for ever be this happy day!"—

These words, so distinctly pronounced and repeated, were heard clearly in the sitting-room. Mrs. Growell, unable to support the violent emotions of joy and surprise, fainted away. Her

husband and Lord Milborn, scarcely knowing what they did, hastened to the man, who was one of Lord Milborn's servants. His lordship shook his friend by the hand, and darted into his carriage, which was waiting, ordering the coachman to drive home as speedily as possible. "I will distribute," said he, "a hundred guineas among you all, as soon as I return." The promise was, however, unnecessary; affection and zeal were two agents sufficient to second every wish of their beloved master. The horses themselves seemed to anticipate the intentions of the hand that guided them, for they performed the six miles in less than thirty minutes.

Nothing could be more affecting, nothing more interesting, than the meeting of that amiable couple. Lord Milborn found his lady reclining upon a sofa, her two daughters supporting her in their arms, and Alfred, upon his

knees, held one of her hands in his. The most lively satisfaction was painted on every countenance; Lord Milborn took his place by the side of his son, and after having expressed every sentiment that tenderness could suggest, he deplored the visible alteration that had taken place in Lady Milborn's looks. She was going to reply, when his attention became attracted by the spots of blood upon her dress. Supposing her to have been wounded, he uttered a shriek of horror. "Do not be alarmed," said she, "that blood is not mine. As soon as we are a little more composed, I will relate to you and to my children, all that has happened to me. But first, let me present to you one of my deliverers. Captain Grimsby, you must permit my lord to join his thanks to mine."

Lord Milborn then, for the first time, perceived that a very elegant young

man, in regimentals, was sitting in a corner of the room. He was contemplating with heart-felt satisfaction a scene, to which he had been so fortunate as to contribute. He arose when Lady Milborn spoke of him; and Lord Milborn, taking him affectionately by the hand, placed it to his heart. "As long," said he, "as *that* continues to beat, it will preserve the remembrance of what I owe you. Excuse, Captain Grimsby, my being little able at this moment to express my gratitude. I am not yet sufficiently myself; but be assured that Milborn will never be ungrateful."

Captain Grimsby requested that his lordship would not pay any attention to him, nor think of rating so highly what every other man must have found himself happy to perform.

Pleasure creates as much mental confusion as grief. The Milborn fa-

mily gave sufficient proof of it; tears, embraces, sentences half pronounced, every person and every action would have appeared, to an indifferent spectator, to be the effect of the wildest emotion.

Tranquillity was at length restored, and inquiries on every side had been made. Lady Milborn gave a full detail of all the occurrences, and added, that as soon as the post-chaise which Captain Grimsby had sent for, was arrived, she left Wooded Priory.

“This amiable officer,” said she, “carried his kindness so far, as to insist upon accompanying me here; and we were escorted by six of his men.”

The whole family joined in making the warmest acknowledgments of gratitude to the young warrior.

I cannot attempt to describe the impression made by Lady Milborn’s recital upon the minds of her little auditory;

the love that her family bore her is sufficiently known for the reader to form an opinion of it.

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of village music, advancing towards the hall. The neighbouring tenants and peasantry were come to celebrate the joyous day. Lady Milborn, affected by that proof of attachment to her person, went to the hall-door, to show herself to them. As soon as she appeared, there was an universal cry of, "There she is!—there is Lady Milborn!—and blessed for ever be the man who has restored her to our prayers!"

"That concerns *you*," said Lord Milborn to Captain Grimsby, who was standing with him behind Lady Milborn.

"Here he is, my good friends; here is Captain Grimsby, the saviour of my wife!" and Captain Grimsby was

obliged to show himself, by the side of Lady Milborn. They cheered him with three loud huzzas, and the family returned up stairs.

At the same moment, Mrs. Growell's carriage entered the court. Mrs. Growell flew to embrace her friend. "Oh, Lady Milborn!" she exclaimed with enthusiasm, "little do you know what I have suffered on your account!"

"I am fully persuaded of your attachment, my dear Mrs. Growell; and of the tender interest you have taken in my recent calamities."

Lord Milborn gave orders that wine and ale should be plentifully distributed, with all the eatables that could be procured. He gave two hundred pounds among the poorest inhabitants of the village, and at the same time, the promise made to his coachman was fulfilled.

Mr. Growell took Lord Milborn aside.

“All this, my good friend, is expensive, and I know that you cannot very well afford it. Do me the pleasure to accept this pocket-book; it contains a thousand pounds in bank notes.”

Lord Milborn positively refused this fresh instance of regard.

“I owe you,” said he, “too much, already.”

“Well, then, you no longer consider me as your friend.”

“As my best, nay indeed, my only friend.”

“Then convince me of it, by accepting this trifle. If you refuse me again, I shall think,....”

“Oh, think only what is true, that, next to my family, you are nearest to my heart.”

“Then you will take it.”

“Since it *must* be so, I will.”

Lady Milborn had made inquiries after Godwin; but her lord, wishing

that no dark shade should obscure the brightness of that evening, had only replied that he was absent.

Towards night, Captain Grimsby took his leave, requesting permission to repeat, sometimes, his visits.

"It is for us," said Lord Milborn, "to solicit that favour. Come often, I beseech you, and enjoy the fruit of your philanthropy; nothing can possibly afford us greater pleasure."

The detachment commanded by Captain Grimsby was going into quarters at a little town called Brough, about six miles distant from Milborn-Hall. That part of the country was so perpetually infested by robbers, that it was found necessary to station there some military. The young officer departed with the six men whom he had brought to escort Lady Milborn, and they had not been forgotten in his lordship's munificence.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell did not return home that night. It was impossible for them so soon to separate from Lady Milborn, whom they had not seen for so long a time, and they expressed the most boundless satisfaction as they contemplated that amiable woman once more surrounded by her family. So many proofs of affection were well calculated to work upon her feelings, and she expressed the most lively satisfaction in assuring Mrs. Growell that her regard for her could terminate only with her existence.

Tranquillity and happiness reigned again at Milborn-Hall. The intelligence of Godwin's being married to Clara would have been pleasing to Lady Milborn, had it met the approbation of Clara's parents; but to know that her son had so far forgotten himself, and the numberless obligations that his own family lay under to

Mr. Growell's, as to elope with their daughter, was a source of much uneasiness to her. Her friends, however, having been so delicate as never to mention the subject, she felt her resentment gradually subside: it gave way to pity and commiseration; for she could scarcely suppose that the young people were in the most prosperous situation. How were they to live?—That reflection, which she communicated to her lord, made them both anxious to know where to find them, that they might send them a supply. Godwin's silence became extremely painful to them. Could he for a moment doubt either their tenderness or indulgence?

END OF VOL. I.

CAN WE DOUBT IT?

OR, THE

GENUINE HISTORY

OF

TWO FAMILIES

OF

NORWICH.

By CHARLOTTE BOURNON-MALARME,

Member of the Academy of Arcades of Rome.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By MRS. VILLA-REAL GOOCH.

The punishment of the wicked, for being long delayed, is not the less severe.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CAN WE DOUBT IT?

&c.

CHAP. XVII.

As soon as Godwin and Clara were united, they set out for London. Their only treasure consisted in three hundred pounds, which Godwin possessed, and Clara had two hundred, besides some jewels. Slender resources, which, to their inexperienced minds, seemed inexhaustible!

The reader will perhaps suppose, from their going to the metropolis, that they had formed some plan, rela-

tive to their future way of life. Nothing like it: each of them felt the strongest desire imaginable to see that capital, of which all Europe speaks with admiration. They proposed staying there one month, which they intended to employ in visiting every object calculated to inspire curiosity. They spoke of writing from thence to their respective families.

Their plan, conducted by boundless extravagance, was immediately executed. During one month, these young people, passionately fond of each other, went every where; and during that short interval, were scarcely an hour asunder.

Clara was the first to propose their writing to their friends. One half of their money yet remained, and Godwin told his wife that they had better wait another fortnight before they wrote, as it would give them time to visit the

different places which they had not yet seen. That fortnight being expired, it was proposed to wait another, and so they continued until three months had passed away, and with them all their cash had likewise disappeared. Nothing remained but the trinkets, which were trifling; but it was now necessary to have recourse to them. Godwin took upon himself to go and sell them. It was the first time of his going out without his wife, and it was nine in the morning when he did so. He did not return until three, and Clara perceived that his temper was ruffled. She was, however, prudent enough not to take any notice of it. Godwin informed her that he had disposed of her watch, of her rings, of her bracelets, and of her sweet-meat box, for fifty guineas. He might as well have said that he had given them.

Their intrinsic value was above three

hundred pounds. That slender acquisition could not go far. Clara once more asked her husband to write to Milborn-Hall, and she would do the same, she said, by Sumptuous Castle. Godwin made her no other answer, than that he had no inclination to go and bury himself at either of those places.

“In that case, my dear, what do you intend to do?—What will become of us?—In another week we shall be without a shilling.”

“Between that and the present time,” replied Godwin, “I shall have other resources.”

“May I not know of what nature?”

“Clara, I beg you will not ask me any questions. I am not a child, to be held by a leading-string. Make yourself happy, and let me do as I please.”

Godwin had never before spoken to her in that manner. She perceived in

a moment the depth of the precipice into which she had fallen. Godwin's true character now appeared manifest. "He is," said she, "a tyrant, who wishes to make me a submissive slave: it is all over, my fate is decided! I shall be for ever wretched, and I have not even a right to complain. It has been my own doing, and nothing now remains for me but silence and resignation."

Godwin's way of life became entirely changed. In the day-time, he seldom passed more than two hours with his wife, and frequently slept from home. Of the fifty guineas that he had received for her ornaments, he had given her only five for the expences of house-keeping; and although she adopted the most minute economy, it was impossible to make such a trifle go far: particularly as she had two servants to support. Her first care was, therefore,

to discharge the footman. One maid being sufficient for her, it would be folly to keep any more. Mr. Milborn did not reflect, like his wife, upon the subject, but imputed it as a fault that he had not been consulted.

It was impossible to live destitute of necessaries. Debts were unavoidably contracted, without the means being known how to discharge them. That course of life, so extremely painful to an honourable mind, lasted three months longer. Clara's gentleness and patience were really inexhaustible. Creditors, who were by no means pacifically inclined, and who, besides, could not say with Clara, "It has been my own doing, I must suffer, and be silent," came to make disturbance, and to demand what was their due. Clara wept, Godwin raved, and no person was paid.

The next morning, Mr. Milborn, who had passed the night from home, came

in at ten o'clock. He approached his wife with a smiling countenance; and, throwing a handful of guineas upon her knee, desired her to order for him a good dinner.

“Come, Clara, let us be happy. I hope that we shall not see any more of those bull-dogs that barked at us so furiously yesterday. I am going to pay every one of them. Fortune favours us, my dear; so let me see you no more with your pitiful faces that do not add to your beauty. *Vive le plaisir et l'argent !*”

Having finished his wise harangue, he left the room, and went out.

Clara had not attained her twentieth year. She knew nothing more of the world than what she had heard from vague report. The resources and the dangers, therefore, of large towns, were equally unknown to her. She could not form any disagreeable idea of the

means employed by Godwin to procure money; she supposed that he had, in all probability, met with some of the relations or friends of his father, who had made no scruple to lend him their assistance.

Clara was very far from suspecting the truth: the fact was, that young Milborn was fast hastening to his destruction. He had formed an intimacy with several dissipated young men, who had introduced him into private gambling-houses. Fortune was at first favourable to him; he won several hundred pounds, of which he made the use already mentioned in this chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

CAPTAIN GRIMSBY failed not to avail himself of the permission that had been given him of going frequently to Milborn-Hall. He had renewed his acquaintance with Alfred, and they were now upon the most intimate terms. Grimsby had great suavity of temper, was of very gentlemanly appearance, and possessed the rare quality of uniting modesty to considerable intellectual endowment. He soon became a favourite as well with the parents as with their children. Ancelina and Harriot he called his little sisters; they each shared his attentions; yet, by studying him a little, it was possible to discover

that he entertained a certain preference for Harriot. That was, however, imperceptible to casual observers; as a proof of which, none of the inhabitants of Milborn-Hall had perceived it; not even Alfred, who so tenderly loved, and was beloved by his sister.

Evan, the savage Evan, ever on the watch, was not a moment mistaken. From the first time of his seeing Captain Grimsby with Harriot, he guessed that he was his rival; and inwardly vowed to sacrifice him to his execrable jealousy. As long as Lord Milborn's daughter continued without receiving the particular attentions of any man, he contented himself with only hating her; but to see another favoured by her who had so daringly offended him as to despise and reject his love, was sufficient to kindle every raging flame in his breast, and suggest to his mind the most horrible ideas.

He held several consultations with his father and mother upon the subject; doubtless they endeavoured to moderate his rage; but did they succeed?—We shall soon be satisfied on that point.

A sumptuous entertainment was given at Milborn-Hall on the anniversary of his lordship's birth-day. Mr. and Mrs. Growell, Aurea, and Evan, were the first invited, and many neighbouring families were likewise expected. Early in the morning Alfred went for Captain Grimsby and Mr. Bradfort, his lieutenant. Those officers took with them some of the band of their regiment, which lay quartered at no great distance.

The dinner was magnificent; the utmost hilarity prevailed, and the company remained at table until ten at night. The weather was charmingly serene, and the company proposed taking a turn in the gardens. On a sud-

den, the music again struck up, which the young people declared to be the signal for a dance. Lord and Lady Milborn could not object to it, and the garden was fixed upon for the ball. In less than an hour a temporary room was erected, and splendidly illuminated. Refreshments of every sort were conveyed thither, and all the guests attended, some to dance, and many to look on.

At a short distance was a labyrinth, so ingeniously contrived that even the inhabitants of the place were frequently lost in it, although there were several apertures. This is a circumstance to which I request the reader will pay attention.

About two in the morning, a servant came to inform Lord Milborn that some person wished to speak with him.

He expressed, contrary to his custom, a degree of ill-humour on being dis-

turbed, but went out to see who it could be. He had been absent near an hour, when dreadful screams were heard which in a moment interrupted the ball and banished pleasure. Every one flew towards the spot from whence they proceeded, which was the labyrinth. A man, seemingly dying, was calling loudly for assistance.

“Great God!”—said Mr. Bradfort, “that is Captain Grimsby’s voice,” and he darted through the first opening. He was followed by many more. They then distinctly heard him exclaim, “Revenge! revenge! I am dying by Lord Milborn’s hand.”—A dead silence succeeded, but soon a repetition of the word “Revenge” was in every one’s mouth.

Mr. Bradfort traversed the thickest mazes of the labyrinth, but the farther he went, the more he was bewildered, every thing opposed his progress. Alfred,

who followed the crowd, listened, and shuddered at the accusation against his father. He knew which way to gain the centre of the place, and offered to conduct Mr. Bradfort to it, but he pushed him away with a motion of horror. Alfred was too equitable to take offence, and he trusted that the dreadful mystery would be very shortly explained. Several servants arrived with flambeaus. The place, covered with blood newly shed, proclaimed that a murder had just been committed there; but neither the body, nor any other vestige could be found. Every one was gazing with astonishment and dread.

“Are there many windings in this labyrinth?” said Bradfort.

“There are five,” replied Evan, who at that moment appeared panting for breath.

“Five!” repeated Bradfort, “then doubtless the murderer has escaped.”

“But,” said another, “what is become of the body? How is it possible that it can have been so speedily conveyed through these intricate mazes?”

Some of the musicians were now assembled there.—“Let us endeavour,” said they, “to find our captain; and if we succeed, what need we care about the rest?” They began to explore the different paths. Alfred, Harriot, and Ancelina, all in silent anguish, went together from the labyrinth.

Lord Milborn had in the mean time returned to the ball-room, and was astonished on finding it deserted. He began to inquire into the cause of that seeming confusion. Mr. Bradfort was the first to join him, which he had no sooner done, than he cried out, “Here is the assassin!” and directly laid hold of Lord Milborn by the arm.

“Hold, Sir!” said Alfred, as he

sprang to his father's assistance, "take care what you are about!"

"Look," continued Bradford, in pointing to Lord Milborn's hands, "they are stained with the blood of my friend. The monster has not even given himself time to wash away the proofs of his guilt!"

Lord Milborn, amazed and speechless, looked upon his hands, and shuddered. An icy coldness seemed to transfix his every limb. Demonstrations of horror and indignation were visible on every countenance. The servants of the house gazed in stupid silence upon each other; not knowing what to imagine, or what to believe.— Lord Milborn, at length recovering himself, entreated an explanation of what he had heard, and what he saw.

"He will get that from the magistrate," said the musicians; "let us conduct him there immediately."

“But,” said Mr. Growell, “I think, gentlemen, you judge a little too rashly of this business; Lord Milborn is my very particular friend; he is a worthy and an honourable man, and he is not to be made responsible for a crime, because it is committed on his premises.”

“Look at his hands,” repeated Bradford; “and did you not all, as well as myself, hear the dying man accuse him?”

“I acknowledge that we did; but where is that dying man?”

“Have we not seen his blood?”

“Blood is a sign, but not a proof; the body alone can witness against him.”

“Let us go to the justice,” again vociferated the musicians; “when he is there, he can explain himself.”

Lord Milborn assured them that he had no objection to appear before any magistrate whatever.—The nearest

lived about three miles from Milborn-Hall; he went thither, accompanied by his son Alfred and Mr. Growell.—The company at the hall immediately dispersed, and quitted it, equally alarmed and terrified.

The moment Ancelina and Harriot were alone, they recollected that Lady Milborn had not been seen since the commencement of the dreadful confusion, and they flew with all imaginable haste to look for her. They traversed the gardens around, but she was not there. A funereal silence had succeeded the boisterous merriment, which, but one hour before, had reigned there. The lights were still seen peeping through the trees, and the rising day guided their agitated steps. Leaning one upon the other, they each aimed at consolation, in the fond hope that they should soon discover the beloved object of their search.

When they drew near the fatal labyrinth, they plainly distinguished Mrs. Growell's voice. She was calling loudly for help, and they hastened to her.

"Come," said she, "come children; help me to restore your mother to life. The horrors of the night have thrown her into this long fainting fit: I was fortunately standing near her, she fell into my arms, and I have laid her, as you see, gently on the grass. I have been ever since endeavouring to bring her to herself. Go to the house, and tell them to come immediately for her.

"We will take her ourselves," said both Harriot and Ancelina; and they began to raise her from the ground. Lady Milborn was very lusty, and the task was not an easy one; but what cannot zeal and filial affection accomplish? Mrs. Growell assisted them, and they at length reached the hall. Lady Milborn was immediately laid upon her

bed, and every possible assistance was administered. The men-servants, seemingly actuated by anxiety, had followed their lord to Gipsoid, where resided Sir Thomas Stapleton, a magistrate of the district. There remained only at the hall, an old and feeble porter; Lady Milborn's own woman, called Diana, and Emery, a very old valet of his lordship's, together with the inferior servants. The two last named had such a faithful attachment to their master, that they swore, were he even found guilty, they would never forsake him.

Diana ran to the assistance of her lady, who, on opening her eyes, looked mournfully around; then, gazing upon her daughters, inquired of them whether she had just awakened from a frightful dream, or, whether what was still before her eyes was a reality?

The girls sighed deeply.

“ I understand you, my children ; I

am no longer in doubt. O God!—for what miseries are we still reserved!—The iron hand of calamity bears hard upon us, and calumny has shed its baneful influence over the excellent husband with which providence has so singularly blessed me!—O God!---of what an act have they dared to accuse him!"

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Growell, pressing tenderly her hand, "do not give way to despair. My lord's innocence will be fully proved; I both hope it, and believe it. It is your friend, your most affectionate friend, who assures you of it,"

Harriot and Ancelina were on their knees, imploring their mother to trust in the justice and goodness of God.

"Can you, my dear children, give me any account of this horrible affair?"

"O, do not, my lady," said Diana, "dwell upon this miserable subject.

Stay till my lord returns, and think of nothing now but of taking the repose, of which you are so very much in want."

"Repose!" said Lady Milborn; "what repose can *I* know, when my respectable husband is appearing before a tribunal, under the horrible suspicion of being a murderer?"

Lady Milborn's grief was so poignant that her friend and her daughters perceived every attempt at consolation would be impotent.---She endeavoured to prevail on Mrs. Growell to return to Sumptuous Castle; who could not however be persuaded to leave her in that deplorable situation.

"Heaven!" said Ancelina, "what is become of Aurea?"---The poor child must be dead with terror!"

"Don't be alarmed about her," said Diana; "Mr. Evan has taken her with

him; they got into a carriage at the same time with my lord."

"I hope," said Mrs. Growell, "that they have not taken my landau."

"No, Madam, I saw them both step into Mr. Evan's chariot."

This sudden and extraordinary departure, without speaking to their mother, whom they had left at Milborn-Hall, equally astonished every one.

CHAP. XIX.

IT was five in the morning when Lord Milborn and his party arrived at Gipsoid. The musicians, on horseback, escorted the carriage, in which sat his lordship, his son Alfred, Mr. Growell, and Lieutenant Bradfort.—Sir Thomas was in bed, and they were shown into a large room. The magistrate joined them about seven o'clock. He first heard Mr. Bradfort's deposition, and afterwards those of the six musicians. As soon as Lord Milborn was permitted to speak, he calmly approached, and not the least agitation seemed to interrupt his habitual tranquillity. Being

interrogated as to the motives which had induced him to leave his company an hour before the murder was committed; he replied, that one of his footmen, whom he named, had called him out of the room, to tell him that a person had something of importance to communicate, and wished, therefore, to speak to him immediately. His lordship added, that several persons must have doubtless noticed how much he was vexed by so singular an interruption. He said, that when he came to the vestibule, a man, whom he had never before seen, urged him to accompany him into the court-yard, fearing, he said, that he might be overheard by some persons in the house. So much mystery appearing to him suspicious, he insisted upon not leaving the house, assuring the man that he might explain himself there with all safety, every one

being in the gardens, of which he might be easily convinced, by the solitude and silence that reigned throughout the house.

“That being the case,” said he, “I will speak to you here. You remember, I suppose, the bond for six thousand pounds, which was apparently signed by yourself, your name at the foot of it having been so perfectly imitated.”

“I certainly have not forgotten that circumstance:—proceed.”—

“I know who committed that forgery, and can furnish you with the means of having the bond set aside.”

“You will, by so doing, render me a very essential service.”

“But I must make one condition.”

“What is it?”

“I am far from being rich, and I request you to promise, that as soon as the business is settled to your satisfac-

tion, you will give me one hundred guineas."

"I agree to it with pleasure."

"Well, then, to-morrow I shall return again, and bring with me every necessary document, that will lead to explanation. You will be under the necessity of going to the manor-house; and, not improbably, to London."

"There will be no great difficulty in that."

"Farewell, my lord; within four-and-twenty hours you shall hear of me again."

"While we were conversing together, we reached the hall steps, which he descended. He then called to me again, and I went to him. 'Before I proceed in this business,' said he, 'you must faithfully promise that you will give me the hundred guineas.'—In saying those words, he held out his hand; I gave him mine, which he shook very

heartily, and then departed, assuring me that he was perfectly satisfied. I hurried back to the garden, without giving myself time for reflection, but little expected the reception that there awaited me."

"What sort of man did this stranger appear to be?"

"An old man, with a countenance by no means prepossessing."

"Cannot you guess, my lord, how your hands became stained with blood?"

"I perceive," replied my lord, as he looked on them, "that one is so stained; it is the same that I gave to the stranger."

They all saw that his left hand was not stained.

"How long has your lordship been acquainted with Captain Grimsby?"—He then explained the very strange occurrence by which Lady Milborn became acquainted with him.

“Do you bear him any ill will?”

“I owe him, on the contrary, every sentiment of gratitude, and I have found him to be truly deserving of my esteem and of my friendship.”

“And yet he has accused you of assassination!”

“They say so, but I cannot believe it.”

“It is a truth, though,” said the musicians.

“I am very sorry, my lord,” said Sir Thomas, “that the duties of my office require that I should commit you, until this business is more minutely investigated.”

“Captain Grimsby’s body has not been found,” said Alfred; “it cannot therefore be ascertained that he is murdered. You will not, surely, Sir, deprive of his liberty a man so universally esteemed as is my father, from

the report of a single voice having been heard, and the person not found."

"Mr. Milborn, I know what I can do, and what I ought to do; but your indiscretion stands perfectly excused, in favour of its affectionate motive."

"Permit me, Sir Thomas, to speak," said Mr. Growell; "Mr. Milborn's observation appears just; and I should think, that without any breach of the duties of your office, you might leave Lord Milborn at liberty, by taking bail, for which I offer you the whole of my estate."

"But this, good Sir, is a case of murder, which cannot admit of bail."

"Captain Grimsby may very soon return among us," replied Alfred with warmth.

"Impossible!" said Bradfort, "his death is too certain. His dying groans were for revenge. Lord Milborn, no

doubt, employed some of his accomplices to carry off the body of my friend."

"Oh, horrible!" said Alfred, as he covered his face with his hands.

Lord Milborn gazed upon his son, whose grief seemed most painfully to afflict him. At that moment, a melancholy tinge overspread his countenance; but soon did conscious innocence restore all his former serenity.

"To what prison, Sir Thomas, am I to go?"

"Where the manor-house, my lord, is held; at Hawfield. I shall not endeavour, my lord, to persuade your friends to search to the bottom of these unparalleled atrocities; they must be fully sensible of the necessity there is for their doing so; for my own part, I firmly believe that your lordship will very shortly be enabled to justify yourself entirely."

They repaired to Hawfield in the same manner they had arrived at Gipsoid. The lieutenant and the musicians did not quit Lord Milborn until they had seen him safely lodged in the prison.—Mr. Growell and Alfred continued with him till three o'clock; and, in taking leave of his father, young Milborn, nearly stifled by his tears, sobbed aloud as he entered the coach.

When the ladies at the hall saw them alight without Lord Milborn, every heart was full. Lady Milborn took her son by the hand:—"Shall I," said she, "be permitted, Alfred, to see him? Can my presence ease his troubled mind?"

"Without doubt, madam," said Mr. Growell, "and I hope that I shall have the honour to accompany you there very frequently."

"And I, also," said Mrs. Growell, warmly.

Harriot and Ancelina protested that they would go and remain in the prison in which their father was confined.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell bade adieu to their friend, with a promise of returning on the second day, and went back to Sumptuous Castle.

Alfred was going to visit the fatal labyrinth, when, upon crossing the hall, he was met, and insolently accosted by all the servants, excepting the three before mentioned, who requested that he would settle their accounts, as they would not, they said, continue in a house, the master of which was taken up for murder. The steward being of the number, there was no one to whom Alfred could give the commission: he took, therefore, the trouble upon himself, and, with some degree of pleasure, banished them the house. After having turned them all off, he pursued his first intention.

Being arrived in the middle of the labyrinth, he perceived that one part of it was literally red with blood. As he was reflecting how it was possible for Captain Grimsby's body to be taken away, he heard several persons approach, among whom he recognized the voice of Emery, who was seemingly at their head. These were the police officers come to visit the place. Emery attended them, to point out the various windings. That which conducted to the little gate, opening into the park, was here and there marked with blood. It had dropped upon several of the shrubs, and could be traced as far as the gate itself. They observed likewise, upon examination, that the grass had been newly trampled on by horses. There could remain then no doubt after that discovery, of poor Grimsby's body having been carried away.—A process was immediately instituted, and the myrmidons of justice withdrew.

Ever since Lady Milborn's unaccountable adventure, Alfred's hatred of Evan had been fast gaining ground. Nothing could persuade him otherwise, than that the villain who had shot at him, while he was defending the honour of his sister, was that infamous young man. His tall and robust stature, his awkward gait, and, above all, the atrocity of the crime, every thing confirmed his suspicions. He was fully persuaded that Mr. Growell had not recognized him, and he was as well convinced that he had taken great care to conceal his intentions from his father; such an avowal, he knew, would be a death-blow to the heart of that worthy friend of his family; but he had, ever since that period, studied every look and every action of Evan's. The fresh calamity that had now befallen his father, forced him to neglect those observations of which he had made latterly a duty.

His whole time was taken up in giving the most manifest tokens of filial affection.

Misfortune acts like an epidemic disease; it frightens every one from us. Those who dwelt in the vicinity of Milborn-Hall, were not satisfied with only keeping away, but dispersed themselves in different directions, whenever Lady Milborn, or any of the children, appeared. Such conduct is, alas! so general, that it affected but little the care-worn family.—Mr. and Mrs. Growell seemed fully sensible of the cruelty and impropriety of their neighbours' conduct. They spoke loudly against all those who behaved so unfeelingly to their friends; but by so doing, they only excited universal censure. "That nabob," said they, "disgraces both himself and his family by associating with people who are lost in the public esteem, and who will very shortly have

no other way left of escaping public insult, than to go and hide themselves in some far-distant country."

The persons who were the most inveterate against the Milborn family, were those who, on the day preceding the fatal night, felt themselves greatly honoured by an invitation to the hall, which they had been proud to accept.

Ancelina and Harriot passed a week alternately in the prison and at home. Lady Milborn went every second day to the former, and Alfred went regularly every morning. He employed the whole remainder of his time in endeavouring to discover some circumstance that might throw light upon that black and abominable transaction, in which Lord Milborn was so cruelly implicated.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell frequently accompanied their friend to Hawfield; and endeavoured, by every possible

consolation, to sooth the sorrows of that unfortunate nobleman. Evan did not attempt to visit either the hall or the prison. He declared publicly that the infamy of the Milborn family was such as to entail disgrace upon every one, who, either from mistaken kindness or carelessness of their own reputation, still continued to visit them.

Notwithstanding the prodigious number of inquiries that were set on foot, it was not possible to substantiate any proof that could either criminate or justify Lord Milborn. In order, therefore, to satisfy his own impatience and that of his family, he requested that he might be brought to trial at the ensuing assizes.

The day was accordingly fixed, and the jury being sworn, Lord Milborn appeared at the bar with all the dignity becoming his rank and his innocence. The calm tranquillity of an honourable

mind reposed upon his respectable countenance. He was again interrogated; there was no confusion in his replies, for they were dictated only by truth. Lieutenant Bradfort, the six musicians, and some of Lord Milborn's former servants, were all the witnesses. Their depositions were alarming, but no facts could be ascertained. The gentlemen of the jury were going to decide, and there was no doubt of Lord Milborn's being honourably acquitted, when a man appeared, who demanded to be heard. He announced himself as a witness to all that had passed, and took an oath accordingly.—Lord Milborn raised his eyes, fixed them on the stranger, and said to the judge, "That is the very man who sent for me at the time of the catastrophe that has conducted me hither."

"The prisoner speaks the truth," replied the man, without any change of

countenance whatever. "It was I who held a conversation with him either just before, or just after, the murder."

"Before you declare any thing more," said the judge, "answer the questions that I am going to put to you. What is your name?"

"Richard Plunkett."

"Your age?"

"Sixty-two."

"Your country?"

"I was born in Ireland, but was brought up, and have lived thirty years in the county of Norfolk. My father's habitation was situate two miles from Peace-House, an estate that belonged to Mr. Farington, the father of Lord Milborn's wife."

"What was your father's situation?"

"He lived upon his own little income."

"Why did you leave the county of Norfolk?"

“To reside near my wife’s family, who were natives of London.”

“Where do you live now?”

“In a small house that belonged to my father-in-law, that I inherited at his death.”

“Where is that small house situate?”

“Between Milborn-Hall and Sumptuous Castle.”

“What do you know of Lord Milborn?”

“I knew him at Norwich, two-and-twenty years since, and we were upon very intimate terms.”

Lord Milborn started in amazement, and attempted to speak. The judge made a sign to him to be silent.

“You have, then, lost sight of him ever since that period?”

“Since the time I mentioned, we have never met, until two months since, when the prisoner, recollecting me, seemed rejoiced, and renewed every

former offer of friendship. I felt highly flattered by his condescension, and he offered to accompany me home. We were both on foot. He then informed me, that particular reasons, which he should at a future period reveal to me, obliged him to request that I would not appear at his house; but he assured me, at the same time, that he would come frequently to mine. I was astonished, and a little hurt by the proposal; he perceived it, and begged me not to be offended, promising that he would very shortly explain the motives which impelled him to it. He came almost every other day for about a month, and we walked frequently together about his grounds. I observed to him one morning that he looked ill and unhappy, and I presumed to inquire into the cause."

"I am very miserable, my dear Plunkett," said he; "I have but too

much reason to be so; I will at one time or other tell you why."

"Wherefore delay that confidence, if it can give ease to your heart?"

"Well, then, I will explain myself, even now. You remember, Richard, how passionately I was in love with Lucretia Farington. I have been married to her now two-and-twenty years, and recollect every circumstance as though it had been yesterday. Would you believe it, Richard? I have ever since loved her as tenderly as on the first day."

"My lord, I do not doubt it."

"But, alas! Richard, she has embittered every future moment of my existence. I am convinced of her infidelity, and my jealousy knows no bounds."

Here Lord Milborn became visibly agitated. "O, God!"—said he, "what

execrable falsehoods from the mouth of that vile impostor!"—

He was again called to order, and the witness continued:

"An officer," said the prisoner, "quartered at Brough, rendered a very material service to my wife; gratitude gave birth to love in her bosom, and they are, I am convinced, mutually attached to each other. I have received positive proof that Lady Milborn and Captain Grimsby are upon the most intimate terms."

"That," said the lieutenant, rising as he spoke, "is a palpable falsehood: a more honourable man did not exist than my unfortunate friend, and whoever says to the contrary is a liar."

"You must look to the prisoner for that," said the witness; "I only repeat his words."

Bradfort was desired to be silent, so the witness continued:

“My resolution,” said my lord, “is taken, and I will put an end to this abominable intrigue.”

“If,” I replied, “you are so thoroughly convinced of the perfidy of your wife, and the duplicity of her lover, why not call out the latter to make honourable reparation?”

“I have formed a different design, Richard,” said my lord, “which I will communicate to you, as it may be in your power to serve me in it essentially. Farewell; to-morrow I may possibly see you.”—

“Four days afterwards passed without my hearing of, or seeing him; on the fifth he came at an early hour. “The time of revenge,” said he, “is now arrived. To-morrow my sufferings will cease.”

“You make me happy by saying so!”

“To-morrow will be the anniversary of my birth; I am to give an en-

tainment, to which I have invited about fifty of my neighbours. At night, a part of the gardens will be illuminated; and the guests will, doubtless, all repair thither. At two or three in the morning, I will conduct Grimsby into the labyrinth, under the pretence of looking at something there; and as soon as I have got him into the middle of it, I will plunge a knife into his heart. A man on whom I can depend, will be in the labyrinth before me, and will, while I am returning to the company, carry off the body through one of the windings, when he will soon gain the little gate that opens into the park. He will place it on a horse, and convey it to the river Ivel."

"I listened to him with horror. 'Wretch!' said I, when he had ceased speaking, 'and is it thus you coolly meditate the most diabolical murder? Renounce the sanguinary thought, swear

to me that you will instantly renounce it, or I will become an informer, and betray you.'—He seemed alarmed at my manner, and kept, for some minutes, a profound silence. At length he said, "You have opened my eyes; I should indeed have been guilty of a horrible crime; I thank you, my good friend, you have saved me from destruction. I will go instantly to the man in whom I had confided, and tell him that my mind is no longer the same."

"Are you sure," said I, "of that man's discretion?"

"I pay too dearly for his silence to doubt it."

"During the whole of the day, I was tormented by the dreadful confidence that Lord Milborn had reposed in me. I knew that he had in his youth given much trouble and uneasiness to his parents, because his manners were dissolute, but I never suspected him capable

of committing a crime. I was several times on the point of lodging an information against him; but the promise he had made me was apparently so sincere, and his repentance so just, that, on account of his family, I had determined to be silent; resolving, however, not to quit the gardens of Milborn-Hall either on that day, or the following night. I knew that I could conceal myself from observation in a variety of places.—It was night when the prisoner came down with his company. The illumination enabled me to observe his countenance; his agitation was extreme, and it confirmed my horrible suspicion. About one in the morning I saw him go out of the temporary room; and, following him at a distance, I perceived him to be in a deep and mysterious conversation with a man, whom I had often observed to walk with him. Supposing that he was his accomplice,

I continued to follow ; he took the road to the labyrinth, and came out at the little gate of the park. My doubts then ceased, and I was convinced that the murder would be committed. To prevent it, I sent for Lord Milborn, determined to terrify him from his purpose ; but above three quarters of an hour elapsed before he came to me ; and when he did, I found that, though he affected an air of tranquillity, his eyes betrayed evident symptoms of horror and remorse. I told him, without preamble, of my suspicions and my fears : he swore to me by every thing sacred in man, that he had not only renounced every idea of revenge against Captain Grimsby, but that he was now convinced of his having accused both that gentleman and Lady Milborn wrongfully ; and he added, that he now felt as much esteem and friendship for the

former, as he had but two days since experienced hatred and animosity.

“As I did not suppose there could exist in a man’s heart so much atrocity I placed every confidence in what he uttered; and, on his remarking that I looked fatigued and exhausted, he offered me a few glasses of Spanish wine, which I accepted. As none of the servants remained in the house, his lordship went for it himself, and presented it to me. I drank two or three glasses; when, perceiving that he wished to return to his company, I took my leave. He conducted me as far as the steps, shook hands, and bade me farewell. The porter, who was in the hall, saw us separate. I had scarcely reached my own house, before the most excruciating pains came all over me. I instantly formed the idea that the wine Lord Milborn had given me was poisoned; and I swallowed hastily a quantity of

milk and mukoca* ; these antidotes caused violent vomitings, which continued more than eight and forty hours, and to them succeeded excessive debility. I have been so very ill ever since, that my daughter has been greatly alarmed for my life. Last evening was the first time of my going out of the house ; and I then heard that the promises the prisoner had made me were only for the purpose of getting me out of the way ; and, in order to stop my mouth more affectually, he had certainly projected my death. This is not a time to use delicacy towards him, and I thought it my duty to come here, in order to make, before the prisoner, my present declaration."

"It comes very late," said the judge, while he earnestly gazed on the witness.

* An antidote taken from a plant that grows in Canada, which has the appearance of pepper-corns.

“ I have, already,” said he, “ explained the motive which prevented my coming sooner.”

“ That man,” said Alfred, whose rage nearly choked him, “ is an infernal scoundrel. Who can for a moment contemplate his hypocritical countenance, and not see that he is the vilest of impostors ?”

“ Mr. Milborn,” said the judge, “ recollect where you are, and pray observe silence.”

During the latter part of the witness's discourse, Lord Milborn recovered his serenity, and listened to him with a sort of curiosity. Mr. Growell was much less master of himself. The horror depicted on his inflamed and agitated countenance, gave him much more the appearance of being the accused person than his friend.

“ Mr. Plunkett,” said the judge, “ you are doubtless informed of the conse-

quence of lodging an information of so much consequence as the present. You are not ignorant, I suppose, that you must from this moment be a prisoner; and that your liberty cannot be restored to you, unless the accused be condemned."

Plunkett stammered, and observed that it was an unwarrantable act of authority.

"It is one of the wisest acts of the law," continued the judge; "for it prevents dreadful abuses. You know, Mr. Plunkett, that a man who is the enemy of another, might fabricate an atrocious history against him; lodge an information against him; and then disappear. Our code of criminal law has obviated that scandalous possibility; and the informer, who has spoken nothing but the truth, has no cause for apprehension."

Then turning to the jury;—"You see, gentlemen," said he, "that nothing

can be done in this cause to-day. I conceive that it will take some time to follow up every eventful incident of this most unparalleled transaction; which appears, at least to me, unfathomably mysterious."

He arose, and the court broke up: Lord Milborn was reconducted to prison; and the witness was, in like manner, escorted to jail.

CHAP. XX.

FORTUNE, which had begun by favouring Godwin, continued for some time to do so, which proved, in the end, his greatest calamity. Possessing the means of satisfying his inclinations, he was not backward in their accomplishment. He had, until that period, drunk very moderately; but now, a day never passed, that he was not seen in the most degrading state of intoxication, and then Clara experienced from him the most cruel and undeserved treatment. Godwin had heretofore uniformly frequented the first company, he had never known any other; now, he was become a constant inmate

of the most disreputable and disorderly houses. The air breathed in them is infectious, and poor Clara became a victim to the contagion. Young Milborn, who had been educated in every noble sentiment, had never formerly sought to embroil himself in what are called affairs of honour, yet he would never brook an offence, until he had received for it ample satisfaction. Now, ever ready, and even anxious to insult, he was become a determined duellist, and considered every adversary that he was fortunate enough to send to the tomb, as a new trophy added to his victories. Unfortunate Godwin!—Unhappy, wretched Clara!—What a melancholy perspective opens to the view of both on your future destiny; and, alas! how few will you find susceptible of pity!

More than two months had passed wherein Clara had constantly bewailed

her disastrous fate. Her husband frequently staid three or four days, without showing himself at home; and, whenever he did so, his temper was so bad, that she became at length induced to wish that his absence might be longer and more frequent. Her fate was become so truly insupportable, that had she not been far advanced in pregnancy, she would certainly have put a period to her existence. Once she took up a pen to write to her mother; but the dread of drawing down upon herself new disasters, caused her to destroy the half-finished letter. How, she thought, could she expect any favour from them, knowing, as she did, that Mr. and Mrs. Growell had never felt any thing like tenderness, but for Evan; and that he would be so far from interesting himself in her behalf, that he would rather endeavour to augment their just cause of displeasure against her?---She must,

then, continue to suffer and be silent, looking forward to death as the only advantage now in reserve for her.

Clara was but just recovering from an illness as humiliating as it had been dangerous, when one day, which made the sixth of Godwin's absence, two bailiffs entered the room where she was sitting, and told her that they had an execution upon her furniture for one hundred pounds, owing by Mr. Milborn. No opposition could arise on her part; she was weak, languishing, and nearly broken-hearted. She sat down mournfully, in a corner of the room, and witnessed the inventory making of all the property she possessed. She inquired if they knew where her husband was?---One of them answered with a sneer, that she must inquire about *him* in Newgate. These words explained all!

“He is then in prison!” cried she, in agony. “If he pays one hundred

pounds, he will be as free as you and I are ; and you are handsome enough, my dear," said the unfeeling monster, " to raise that sum presently. Good day, Mrs. Milborn."

Clara did not pay any attention to his insolent language, but took her hat and shawl, and was preparing to go out, when the man who remained in possession, more civil than his companion, assured her that she might depend upon his care, and that no one should touch any thing belonging to her, during her absence.

" You know, Madam," said he, " that nothing belonging individually to yourself is included in this seizure; and I think you had better take from hence every thing that does so, to-morrow morning."

" I am much obliged by your advice ; but at present I can think of nothing but of going to my husband."

Arrived at that desolating place, she inquired for Mr. Milborn; and was shown into a small room, where she found him sitting familiarly with two women, whose appearance declared what they were, and two young men. As soon as he perceived her, he cried out, "What, Clara! is it you?—I am glad to see you; take a chair and let us drown our misfortunes in wine."

Clara, shocked by the cool indifference of his manner in that dreadful situation, and still more so by the bad company in which she found him, drew back, and declined acceding to his ill-timed proposal.

"So, that is your wife, Milborn," said one of the women: "she is pretty enough."

"But she's so devilish prudish," said the other, "that I think, Milborn, she will not greatly contribute to your amusement here."

“Why, how stupid you look, Clara!” said Milborn. “You must lay aside those fine-lady airs; forget the past, and remember only that you are no longer the daughter of a wealthy nabob, nor I the son of Lord Milborn. Here am I, penned up in these walls, and perhaps for the remainder of my life: well, nothing like resolution. And here are two fine women who come to comfort me; and these two good fellows are my intimate friends. You shall join our little party, and be as gay as ourselves.”

Clara could only reply to this eloquent harangue by her tears.

One of the women rose up.

“Your wife,” said she, “gives me the vapours. I’ll come back when she’s gone.”

“Charming Maria!” said Godwin, “do not, for heaven’s sake, leave me.”

Then addressing himself to his wife, “You see what you have done, Clara;

do, return home, and make up your mind to what has happened."

"Are you then," said she, "never alone?—If you will appoint any hour when my presence cannot offend, I will come and sit with you."

One of the company informed Mrs. Milborn, that, as their society never met until the dinner hour, she could come every morning, and stay till that time.

"I will be here, then," said she, "by nine to-morrow morning. Farewell."—He just nodded to her, and she had almost reached the outer door, when he ran after her, called her back, and desired that she would give him a couple of guineas."

"I have," said she, "but one; there it is;—take it."

"Little enough, indeed," replied Godwin; "the bill will come to more. Well, never mind, I can put off that

till to-morrow ; but then you must bring me more money."

As the turnkey was standing near them, Clara would not enter into any particular conversation with her husband ; but determined to inform him in the morning of the seizure of their goods, of which he was certainly ignorant, as well as of her own embarrassment.

What a situation was this for a young woman to find herself in, who had been nursed in the bosom of opulence, and had never formed any idea of want !— Ten or twelve guineas were now the whole of her fortune, and she was on the eve of an event, which, notwithstanding the most rigid economy, is always expensive.

It was necessary that she should look out for a ready-furnished lodging ; but she knew not to whom she could apply. The man in possession soon obviated

that difficulty, by saying that he would recommend her to his sister, who had several apartments to let. She accepted the proposal; and, before she went to Newgate the next morning, she had taken possession of a small, but neatly-furnished lodging, for which she had agreed to pay half-a-guinea a week. It was situated in Arundel Street, Strand. The civil bailiff engaged to send to his sister's house, every thing that Sarah had packed up for her mistress.

Clara was now in Newgate before nine o'clock. The instant she came in, Godwin cried out, "I hope, Clara, you have brought me some money."

"There," said she, "is our whole treasure;" and she placed six guineas upon the table, near which he was sitting.

"What good will that do?" replied Godwin, as he shoved the money to

the other side of it; "go back, Clara; send for a broker, and sell off the furniture."

"It afflicts me, Godwin, to add to your distresses, by informing you of a circumstance that must do so. Our effects are seized by a creditor to whom you owe above a hundred pounds; and they are to be taken away and sold, this very morning."

"A curse upon the whole tribe of usurers!" vociferated Godwin: "it is that damned dog, Ishmael, to whom I gave my bond for a hundred guineas, in consideration for eighteen that he lent me."

"Great God!" said Mrs. Milborn, "how could you possibly consent to give such extravagant interest?"

"Extravagant, indeed! when a man is without money, nothing that can procure it, is extravagant. Women are

strange creatures ; they must know every thing, and judge of every thing."

" My dear Godwin, it was very far from my intention to offend you ; forgive the impropriety of the expression ; I wished only to sooth your sorrows ; but I will carefully avoid, in future, saying any thing that may displease you."

" My kind Clara," said Godwin, affectionately taking one of her hands, which he pressed in both his, " you are an angel of gentleness and resignation. I have made you miserable ; I make you so still ; and yet I know how to value you, and to appreciate your virtues. This journey to London has ruined me. Bad example has perverted my mind ; I have sometimes lucid intervals, and then my heart fills with the most sincere repentance. Unhappily, however, the irresistible impulse of my

passions hurries me along; habit acquires strength, and I again fall into the most blameable and monstrous excesses."

"And yet, my dear Godwin, your being so sensible of your errors, leads me to believe that you are on the point of renouncing them."

"Oh, do not think so; do not flatter yourself so; even at this very moment, in which I lay open to you my whole heart, I find myself languid and uncomfortable, and in want of dissipation; and, although I still love you tenderly, Clara, I will confess to you, that it would be impossible for me to pass a whole day with you alone."

After this very true and candid confession, Clara could no longer entertain the most distant hope of her husband's conversion. Faithful, however, to her duty and to her principles, she devoted her whole time in endeavouring to re-

store to him some degree of tranquillity.

At the hour when his friends were expected, she arose to take her leave. "My presence," said she, "would be only an incumbrance, and, were I to stay, I should be continually wounded by the language and the manners of the people with whom you associate; neither you, nor myself, Godwin, were ever accustomed to such society."

"Always, Clara, thinking of the past! I have told you, that we must forget who we were."

"Misfortune, Godwin, I can feel, must wither the heart, but it ought not to corrupt it; and, believe me, that self-approbation is the first comfort of the unfortunate!"

"Your sermon, Clara, would send me asleep, were it not for a laughable idea just come into my mind. Is it for a young woman of eighteen, who has

fled the paternal roof, with a wild young man, who, instead of taking her to Scotland, and from thence to London, might have taken her wherever he pleased elsewhere—is it for that young woman, I say, to preach up virtue, and to rail at the dissoluteness of the times?”

After pronouncing this cruel, this bitter sentence, Godwin yawned, stretched himself, and put the six guineas, that still lay on the table, into his pocket.

Clara coloured, both at the indelicate reproach that he had dared to make upon her confidence in his honour, and at the unfeeling barbarity with which he had deprived her of all the money which she had told him she possessed. Her heart was quite full; she longed to relieve it by tears; but she wished to conceal them from the man who had been ungrateful and cruel enough to cause them to flow. She hastened to

leave a place where she saw that nothing but misery could await her.

When she returned to her lodging, she found there the honest Wilson, who requested his sister, in Mr. Milborn's presence, to pay her every possible attention that was due to her suffering virtues. The interest that this man so kindly took in her fate, originated in the excessive grief by which he had seen her overwhelmed. He was, though of a rude profession, a man of feeling; and he had remarked with what impatience Mrs. Milborn had hurried to Newgate, to visit her unfaithful and barbarous husband; and his pity became warmly increased, when, as soon as she had quitted her habitation, several of the neighbours came to inquire what was become of Mrs. Milborn? The praises of that charming woman were in every mouth; but, what a different character was given by them of Mr.

Milborn! All these circumstances combined to induce Wilson to render her every service. He had a large family, and very little property. He could not, therefore assist her with his purse; but there were other ways of being useful to her, and those he resolved to employ. He felt satisfied by the change of her residence; for he knew that his sister would be studious to oblige her, and that she would be better attended to in her house than elsewhere.

Miss Wilson was not young; she had been hitherto successful in her humble situation; her temper was very even; she led a quiet and peaceable life, and had always let her lodgings to respectable people. She kept a maid-servant, more for the convenience of the lodgers, than for her own accommodation. She was warmly attached to her brother, and his recommendation was every thing in her opinion.

Clara had given to her husband the half only of what she possessed. She had, therefore, six guineas remaining, but not a single resource beyond them. She expected, in another month, to give birth to an infant; and how was she, from such slender means to supply the necessary expences of the increase of her family? These reflections were but too much calculated to add poignancy to her deep affliction. She determined upon writing to her friend, Ancelina; she had hitherto delayed doing so, because she had supposed that her stay in London would not allow her time to receive an answer; and she was, besides, at a loss what to say respecting Godwin's conduct. As she could not write any thing in his favour, and as she did not wish to deceive her friend, she for the present preferred keeping the most profound silence.

As she was anxious to know whether

Miss Milborn's sentiments towards her had undergone any change from the inconsiderate step that she had taken, she avoided entering into any particulars in her first letter, further than expressing the most sincere regret at her having exposed herself to the forfeiture of Lord and Lady Milborn's regard; and concluded her letter by entreating that Ancelina would not show it to her parents, and most particularly not to her brother Evan. She solicited a very early reply, after which, she said, she would enter into every detail that must be interesting to friendship. She implored her friend to inform her whether the excellent Lady Milborn was restored to her family.

CHAP. XXI.

THE day appointed for Lord Milborn's trial was a day of trouble, anxiety, and agony to his family. The most upright cause is not always the clearest; men are not angels; they can only pronounce from appearances; and it must be acknowledged, that appearances were almost every one against him.

Mr. Growell attended with Alfred at this important trial, and the reader may remember with what dread and horror the nabob had listened to the tremendous evidence given by the Irishman, Richard Plunkett.

Mrs. Growell, equally as zealous and attentive as her husband, made it a duty to pass every day at Milborn-Hall. Evan, on his part, went to hear the trial, in the hope of being one of the first to enjoy the effect that Lord Milborn's condemnation would have upon him; for he had no idea that it could possibly end otherwise.

On that momentous day, an express arrived about twelve o'clock at Milborn-Hall. He was the bearer of a letter for Lady Milborn, which he delivered to the porter, and rode off, observing that it did not require any answer. Lady Milborn was sitting in the drawing-room with Mrs. Growell and her two daughters. She opened the letter, and read as follows:

“At the moment, madam, of your perusing this letter, your worthy, but unfortunate lord, will stand accused of a new crime, as false and atrocious as

the infamous and perfidious charges that have already bereft him of his liberty. His destruction, yours, and that of all those most dear to you, is resolved on. Be strictly on your guard: your enemies will stop at nothing, in order to succeed in their homicidal projects. They can, and they will, throw away money, and shed blood, to effect your total ruin. Tremble, unfortunate and interesting lady! You are surrounded by snares so artfully interwoven, that it is almost impossible to perceive them. But you will be surprised, perhaps, that I should foretel you of calamities which nothing can prevent; my only motive is to caution you against those, whom your too-unbounded confidence in a great measure encourages. You must learn to be mistrustful. My heart bleeds over your sufferings; they destroy my peace; and, what will appear still more extra-

ordinary to you, is, that I neither can, nor ought to put an end to them.

“The mysterious manner in which I write, may probably lead you to suspect me; but you would in that case be doubly in the wrong; first, as my intention cannot be bad, whilst I am interesting myself in the cause of persecuted goodness; and next, as a want of forecast is frequently the cause of the most heavy calamities, it is always satisfactory to find oneself guarded by precaution. Notwithstanding all the fears which suggest themselves to me on your account, and which I have just explained, I do not despair of one day seeing you triumph over the diabolical machinations of your enemies. Guilt, as well as innocence, should listen to the voice of prudence. When the wicked are too solicitous to immolate their victims, the latter often elude the

machinations of the former, as they are not always circumscribed within the circle of probability. They generally rush forward with too much precipitation, in order to satisfy their revenge. What then is the certain consequence? —The eyes which are exercised in penetrating the inmost recesses of the heart, perceive, by degrees, the imposture. As soon as suspicion is awakened, every thing appears exaggerated; inquiries are set on foot; the villain becomes confused; hesitates, contradicts himself, confesses, and concludes by revealing his accomplices. As it is possible that all this may appear in the case, and in favour of Lord Milborn, I exhort you to arm yourself with courage.

“As my name could neither add to, nor diminish the confidence you will place in my letter, for I have not the

honour to be known to you, I think that there would be no use in subscribing it here."

While Lady Milborn was reading this incomprehensible letter, she changed colour several times. Her agitation increased so visibly, that her daughters fearing it contained the fiat of her fate, arose, and threw themselves on their knees before her. Mrs. Growell, who had likewise conceived the same idea, went up to her friend, with the intention of consoling her under the grief by which she seemed overpowered.

"You are all mistaken," said Lady Milborn, "as to the feelings that excite my present emotion. Harriot, read that letter aloud. Its contents will surely astonish you, as well as myself."

Harriot read it attentively, throughout. As soon as she had finished, Ancelina observed, that doubtless the writer was a man of honour.

“He would have appeared much more so,” said Mrs. Growell, “if he had made himself known. The author of an anonymous letter can never merit confidence. Therefore, my good friend, I place very little, I assure you, in this. Yet, I confess that it alarms me; for it speaks of a fresh accusation. Great God! what could they accuse him of more horrible than murder?”

“It will be easy for us,” said Harriot, “to judge of the sincerity and intentions of this unknown, as soon as the fatal moment of my father’s trial is over; if he announces the truth, it is evident that he knows our enemies, and knows, likewise, their secret; for as the trial is to begin at one, and this letter was delivered here at twelve, it could not possibly otherwise explain what *was* to take place.”

“Harriot is in the right,” said Mrs. Growell; “let us wait the event, be-

fore we form any judgment upon the man who has thus prophesied."

At four o'clock a carriage was heard. The young people flew to meet it. Lady Milborn attempted to follow them, but the different emotions of hope and fear in her breast deprived her of the power, and she sunk back in her chair.

Mrs. Growell, scarcely less agitated, had just reached the door, when, perceiving only Alfred and her husband, she mournfully exclaimed, "Without Lord Milborn!"

"An unfortunate accident has happened," replied Mr. Growell.

"A fresh accusation!" said Lady Milborn, who had heard the answer given by their friend.

"Yes, my excellent mother," replied Alfred, "an execrable villain came forward, in the most detestable manner, to

declare that my father was not only guilty of murder, but that it was a pre-meditated crime, committed in cool blood. But, Lady Milborn, I think we should rather rejoice than afflict ourselves at the fury of our enemies. They will betray themselves. I could perceive *that* by the looks of indignation that flashed upon the infamous accuser, from the eyes of the judge, of the jury, and even of the whole court. The villain is detained prisoner until a new trial shall take place, which is to be had after further investigation."

"The writer has not deceived us," said Ancelina to her mother.

Mr. Growell and Alfred asked for an explanation of what she said, and the letter was given to them, which they perused in amazement.

"This is *my* opinion," said Harriot; "the author of that anonymous letter

is one of the accomplices of our persecutors, who begins to feel symptoms of remorse."

"If that be the case," replied Lady Milborn, "he will persevere in the right road, and will very soon tell us more."

Mr. Growell seemed absorbed in reflection. "I am thinking," said he, "upon which of our neighbours we can possibly cast our eyes, in order to discover your enemies."

"How can we have any?"—replied Lady Milborn; "we have never injured mortal!"

"And yet there is no doubt," said Mr. Growell, "of some one's wishing to injure *you*; and I have some suspicion of Major Hartwell. But," continued he in a low voice, "let that be a secret among ourselves; he was certainly one of the most inveterate in accusing my friend on that fatal night."

“The precaution that he has taken to avoid us ever since,” said young Milborn, “would almost confirm the truth of your suggestion. I will go to him to-morrow.”

“Not for the world!” said Mr. Growell;” you are hot-headed; he, too, is hasty, and a quarrel is what you ought, at this moment, most particularly to avoid. *I* will see him; and so perfectly develop him, as to bring back with me either the conviction of his guilt, or the certainty of his innocence.”

Mrs. Growell listened, but said nothing. As soon as he had done speaking, “It is now, said she, *my* turn to say what I think!—I agree with Mr. Growell, respecting the major; but I am convinced that Bradfort has it more at heart to ruin Lord Milborn’s family, than to revenge the death of Captain Grimsby.”

“What can be the cause of your entertaining such an idea?”—replied Lady Milborn. Mr. Bradfort appears to me to be a very worthy young man, and I cannot blame him for his eagerness in endeavouring to discover the murderer of his friend, although we suffer through it so grievously.”

“And it is that same eagerness,” replied Mrs. Growell, “which leads me to suspect him. He acts as a man who wishes to revenge a personal injury.”

“I am going,” said Alfred, “to return to Hawfield. I shall deposit in the register there a copy of the anonymous letter; it may lead to discovery, and conduct us to a happy issue.”

“That may be a good way,” answered Mr. Growell; “but it will be attended with inconvenience, as it must prolong the proceeding, and, consequently, lengthen your father’s captivity. The jury appears to me, to be-

lieve him, what he is, innocent. Little credit was in general given to the odious story of the evidence: my friend will be, therefore, in a very short time, acquitted. The anonymous letter implies a complication of circumstances that must demand several hearings. The cause will not be benefited by that; but will, on the contrary, be protracted."

Mr. Growell's argument did not appear of sufficient importance to Alfred to make him adopt it. His father's friend, perceiving, therefore, that he could not succeed in engaging him to desist from an undertaking, the consequences of which might be fatal, prevailed on him to wait some time at least, and to reflect upon the reasons for and against it. "Wait till to-morrow, my dear Alfred; after a night of reflection, you will probably act with more prudence."

Alfred, unwilling to disoblige Mr.

Growell, consented to the proposed delay, certain, at the same time, in his own mind, that he should not alter his opinion; and trusting that four and twenty hours longer could not possibly make any difference whatever.

As soon as dinner was over, Mr. and Mrs. Growell ordered their carriage, and returned to Sumptuous Castle, leaving the Milborn family a little less dejected than they had been in the morning. A cheering ray broke through, and lightly penetrated the black and dismal clouds of their horizon.

CHAP. XXII.

ALFRED, upon awaking in the morning, found himself exactly in the same way of thinking. The more frequently he perused the anonymous letter, the more he became convinced that it would lead to the justification of his father. His mother and his sisters, whom he consulted, were of the same opinion. Before ten in the morning he mounted his horse, and took the road to Hawfield. He had not proceeded more than a mile, when his horse, taking fright, started, stumbled, and fell. One of Alfred's legs was broken. The excessive pain that he felt, occasioned

him to utter a loud cry. A passing traveller hastened to his assistance; and, after having, with great difficulty, raised him from the horse, which lay upon him, he led him to an adjacent spot. Alfred fainted through excess of pain. When he came to himself, he found that he was in his own bed, surrounded by his weeping family. He became immediately sensible of what had passed, from the violent pains that he felt all over him. He wished to learn every detail of the circumstance; but the surgeon, who had dressed his wound, and who sat near him, requested that he would compose himself.

“But,” said he, “is not my leg broken?”

“Advantage was taken of your insensibility,” replied his mother, “to set it; but this gentleman assures me that you are in a fair way of doing well. Let me entreat you, therefore, not to dis-

compose either your mind or your body; to-morrow morning we will converse upon the deplorable events of this day."

Although Alfred had not any inclination to sleep, necessity compelled him to be quiet. His sister, Harriot, determined to pass the night in his chamber, but concealed herself behind the curtains, to prevent his entering into conversation with her.

As soon as Lady Milborn arose, she visited her son, accompanied by the surgeon, who found him well enough to attend to the recital she had to make.

"About two hours," said Lady Milborn, "after your departure for Hawfield, a middle-aged man, of rather shabby appearance, came here; he was panting for breath, and told the porter that your horse had thrown you on the road, that you had a limb broken, and that it was necessary to go to your as-

sistance. He added, that being in extreme haste, he could not wait a moment, but that they would find you about a mile from hence. Emery, whom the porter called immediately, to inform of the accident, gave himself only time to direct Diana to send for the surgeon, and to get your chamber in readiness, when he went directly to your relief. He ran to one of the farmers, and took two of his men, with a hand-barrow, upon which they placed a mattress, and went to the described place, where they found you, lying near a ditch: but what strangely surprised them, was, that you was without your coat, with nothing more on than your shirt, and was in a state of total insensibility. Your horse was grazing near you. Emery laid you gently on the barrow, and you was brought home in that dreadful situation. Before then, my daughters, who had been informed by

Diana of the accident, revealed it cautiously to me, to prevent the sudden shock your arrival would have occasioned. The surgeon, sent for by Diana, came before you; he set your leg, and assured me that I had nothing to apprehend. This, Alfred, is the way by which we heard of your accident."

"I remember perfectly," said Alfred, "the fall of my horse, and the pain that I felt from it. I remember, likewise, an obliging traveller, whose face is not wholly unknown to me, coming to my assistance; I have no recollection of any thing more."

"That obliging traveller, Alfred," replied Lady Milborn, "was, I believe, a desperate villain, who took advantage of your lamentable situation, to rob you of your money, of your watch, and even of your clothes."

"Did he likewise take my pocket-book?" said Alfred. "How fortunate

it is," continued he, "that I did not put into it the anonymous letter!—there was only a copy of it, which I was taking to Hawfield, and some few bank-notes."

"As that is the case, Ancelina," said Lady Milborn, "take another copy, which you and I will carry there. I am going to my lord, and shall leave Ancelina with him for a few days."

"I cannot believe," said Alfred, "that the man who showed so much humanity could be guilty of robbing me."

"It is a fact, however," said Lady Milborn; "but I will say nothing against him, as he took the trouble to come here; but for that precaution, what a state of horror and suspense should we have all been in!"

Lady Milborn embraced her son, and set out with Ancelina for Hawfield.

Harriot brought in her work, and sat by her brother's bed side.

The news of Alfred's disaster soon reached Sumptuous Castle. Mr. Growell, whose friendship and zeal knew no bounds, came to Milborn-Hall as soon as he had dined.—“Great God!” he exclaimed, upon seeing Alfred in bed, “will destiny then never be tired of persecuting this unfortunate family?—My dear Alfred, tell me how this dreadful catastrophe took place.”

Alfred explained it to him.

“But why, my friend, ride such a dangerous horse?”

“I declare to you, that this is the first trick she ever played. She is my father's favourite mare, on account both of her gentleness, and of the firmness of her legs.”

“How do you find yourself?”

“As well as my situation can admit of.”

“How much must poor Lady Milborn have been shocked!—Alas! how fast do her miseries succeed one another!—Not a day now passes that is not marked by some new affliction!—I will go to her, and inform her, in your presence, what passed at the interview I had this morning with Major Hartwell.”

“Mama is at Hawfield,” said Harriot.

“What, alone?”

“No, my sister is with her.”

“She has taken,” said Alfred, “a second copy of the anonymous letter; that which I had written was stolen from me on the road, together with every thing I had about me.”

“So you persist in your intention,” said Mr. Growell, “and you are in the right; for since the conversation I have held with Major Hartwell, I feel as you do, the necessity of communicating that

letter to the judge. I was with him this morning by half past nine. My visit seemed to surprise him, as we were never upon intimate terms, particularly since your father's dreadful calamity. He received me, however, very amicably. I told him that, as I was going by his house, I was anxious to be informed of the state of his health. After having conversed upon vague and indifferent subjects, the conversation naturally turned upon Lord Milborn's process. "It is," said I, "a most unfortunate affair."

"And is that all?" he replied.

"I do not understand you, Major."

"Why nothing, Mr. Growell, can be clearer. It is a dreadful business; and I must either consider Lord Milborn a vile criminal, or a most deplorable victim."

"My friend," said I, "seems to have many enemies."

"Every thing confirms it."

"His situation, Major, is dreadful."

"If, Mr. Growell, he is innocent, I pity him from the bottom of my soul."

"Why, Major, you seem to doubt it!"

"I shall be convinced when the trial is over."

"And should he be condemned, you will believe him guilty."

"Undoubtedly."

"You admit then, Major, of the infallibility of mankind?"

"Not in general; but I am persuaded that a jury does not condemn one innocent person in five thousand."

"And why should not Lord Milborn be that one innocent?"

"Mr. Growell, you are catechizing me. I am not sworn in upon the jury, and it is fortunate for your friend that I

am not; for if I were, I should certainly vote for his death."

"So you are, or to explain myself better, you believe you are, Major, assured of his guilt."

"Yes."

"What do you say to the deposition of the last evidence?"

"I say that it is a confirmation of the first conviction."

"Revolted by the impertinence of that man, who had suffered me so plainly to read into his abominable sentiments, I arose, and left him. You see, Alfred, that my ideas respecting him were not without foundation. The Major is one of the enemies of your family."

"That," said young Milborn, "is another subject of amazement to add to all those which have taken place within the last two or three years."

“Major Hartwell,” said Harriot, “as well as his son, was always received here with politeness. They appeared to love and to esteem my father.”

“And yet, my dear child, they hate him!—See what duplicity there is among mankind!”

“We must then,” said Harriot, “learn to mistrust every one among us.”

Emery came in, and informed Mr. Growell that his son Evan requested he would go and speak to him in the court.

“Why does he not come in?” said Mr. Growell.

“He says he will not detain you, Sir, five minutes.”

Mr. Growell returned in half an hour. He seemed disconcerted, which he attempted to conceal.—“Unexpected company,” said he, “is arrived at

Sumptuous Castle. I must leave you, Alfred, and perhaps it will not be in my power to see you to-morrow ; but Mrs. Growell will certainly be here to sit with her friend."

CHAP. XXIII.

EVAN had been to consult with his father upon a very disagreeable business in which he had involved himself. He had been dining at the house of Mr. Harris, where he had met Major Hartwell and his son. Some convivial toasts were given, and when Evan was called upon in his turn, he gave, "To the speedy condemnation of the criminal Milborn." However disposed the company were to believe him guilty, this proof of the vileness of Mr. Growell's son's heart was received with an universal hiss. His situation, bordering on inebriation, prevented him from per-

ceiving the indignation he incurred, and he continued: "It is my intention to give a great dinner on the day of his execution, to all those who were at Milborn-Hall on the night of his detection. Gentlemen, I invite you all to the banquet; I beg of you not to forget it."

Young Hartwell was seated by him; he drew his chair still nearer, and said to him in a low voice, "Your conduct is, I am sorry to say, both that of a scoundrel and a coward. I will not listen to any reply that you can make to what I have just now uttered; but, as soon as we rise from table, meet me at the outside of the park-walls. I have a brace of pistols in my father's carriage, you shall make choice of which of them you please. I am not taking Lord Milborn's part in particular, but that of humanity in general."

"That is enough," replied Evan,

“ I agree to your proposal, and shall not drink a glass the less on that account.”

The altercation passed so smoothly, that none of the company noticed it, and the two young men went out together without any remarks being made. They came to a retired spot, which terminated the boundary of the park. Hartwell had taken his pistols, of one of which Evan made choice. They drew lots which should fire first, and fate decided it in favour of the bad cause. Evan shot his adversary in the breast; he fell, seemingly expiring. Evan flew to find his horse, and galloped on to Sumptuous Castle. Being informed on his arrival, that his father was at Milborn-Hall, he ordered a fresh horse to be saddled, and went there. Mr. Growell shuddered, while he listened to the recital of his son's folly, as he contem-

plated the danger to which he had exposed himself.

Major Hartwell was greatly respected in the neighbourhood; it was not, therefore, to be doubted that he would proceed against Evan, whose father now observed that there was no time to be lost, and desired him to go immediately to a place, which he mentioned. As soon, therefore, as Mr. Growell left Alfred, he sent back his carriage, took the road to one of his farms, and walked to the place where he was to find Evan. It was not the moment for reproach; besides, that was what Evan never permitted. Mr. Growell drew from his pocket-book bank-notes to the amount of five hundred pounds, and desired his son to depart immediately for London. He considered the metropolis as being the only safe place wherein his son could avoid the vigilant researches which

would doubtless be made after him by Major Hartwell and his friends.

The news of the duel soon became public. Every one commented upon it in a different manner; some persons reported that Evan had assassinated young Hartwell; who was, however, discovered by some peasants, and conveyed by them to Mr. Harris's house. He was at that time alive, but expired under the operation of his wound being dressed. All that he pronounced, was once, feebly, the name of Evan. A discharged pistol having been found by his side, and a loaded one in his hand, it was clear that the affair had been a regular duel. The Major, who tenderly loved his son, swore to revenge his death. Evan's departure, which was known the following day, was a convincing proof that it was with him that young Hartwell had fought, and proper

people were immediately dispatched to his father's in search of him. Mrs. Growell was inconsolable ; of her four children, not one but the poor Aurea remained with her, and she could not in any shape supply to her the loss of the rest, particularly that of her beloved Evan.

Lady Milborn came in her turn to administer consolation to her friends. She informed them that the judge, into whose hands she had given the copy of the anonymous letter, had appeared singularly struck by the air of truth and candour expressed in it; and that he had entreated her, in case of her receiving any more, to communicate them to him, as well as any thing else that might possibly lead to the elucidating Lord Milborn's innocence, of which he himself entertained not, he said, the smallest doubt whatever.

As soon as Lady Milborn returned to the hall, another letter was put into her hand ; brought, the servant said, by a man who looked like a messenger. Its contents ran thus :

“I expected, Madam, the use that you would make of my letter, and I am not dissatisfied. Take courage, Lady Milborn; the public opinion has begun to change. I possess the means of clearing your lord’s innocence ; but, in me, it would be dreadful to employ them. I can only permit myself to offer up my prayers, and my proceedings ought to prove to you their sincerity.”

It will, perhaps, seem extraordinary to the reader, that, in consequence of the bad opinion formed of Evan by the Milborn family, their suspicions should not have fallen solely upon him. I must therefore give an account of their general ideas respecting this singular young man.

Alfred did not suppose that he was the person who had carried off his mother, yet he felt strongly persuaded that it had not been done without his knowledge, and that his intention was to take advantage of that circumstance, in order to dishonour his sister, and thereby force Lord Milborn to give her hand. With respect to the murder committed, of which his father then stood accused, he could not possibly suspect Evan; having seen him, he was sure, among the crowd which assembled to hasten to the labyrinth. Besides, how could he suspect him to be capable of such a deed of atrocity?—He considered Evan as being a man most desperately in love, and whose indignation, upon finding himself rejected by its object, had irritated the natural fury of his temper.

Harriot had conceived of Evan a far worse opinion than her brother; but

prudence had hitherto sealed her lips. Lord and Lady Milborn and Ancelina had never formed any idea that the son of their friends could ever excite in them subjects of uneasiness; they knew that he had many faults, but they had never suspected him of criminal vices.

A copy of the second anonymous letter was likewise placed in the register of Hawfield, and every search was making with the greatest avidity. The persons employed, repaired to the habitation of Richard Plunkett, which consisted of a small, mean-looking house. The inside of it announced neither ease nor poverty. A woman, about forty years of age, seemed to be the sole inhabitant. She appeared terrified by the sight of two men, who accosted her with an air of severity; but her answers to the questions put to her were clear and precise. They could

not discover in her tokens of either embarrassment or perplexity. When they spoke to her of her father, she said that it was very afflicting to her to know he was in prison, but that she had no disagreeable consequences to apprehend from it, for that he was an honest man, who had thought it his duty to inform against a guilty one. The remainder of what she said, corresponded exactly with what Plunkett had related before the judge. That visit therefore did not lead to any intelligence, and the police officers withdrew.

Alfred's cure advanced rapidly, and they all trusted that the dreadful accident which might have deprived him of life, would not be attended by long confinement.

Lady Milborn continued to return every second day to Hawfield, and her two daughters alternately passed every week there. Mr. and Mrs. Growell,

satisfied that Evan was safe, never passed six days without visiting their unfortunate friend. Lord Milborn, sensible of so many proofs of attachment, endured his calamity with patience, and calmly waited the event of his trial.

The letter that Clara had written to Ancelina, arrived during that interval. She would have been rejoiced to hear of two people so dear to her, had not Clara's melancholy style cast a shade over the pleasure that her remembrance occasioned. The reader may recollect that Mrs. Milborn had, from motives of prudence, avoided any explanation in her letter, and had expressed no other wish than the forgiveness of her parents and the friendship of Ancelina. She had resolved, before she informed them of the horrors of her situation, to be convinced that she was not an object of detestation.

Ancelina received the letter while she was in the prison at Hawfield. As soon as she had read it, she gave it to her father, who perused it with attention and tenderness. Clara neither spoke of uneasiness of mind nor distress of circumstances; but Lord Milborn and his daughter could not be deceived, for her pen seemed to have been guided by the hand of affliction.

“Clara is unhappy!” exclaimed Lord Milborn, “and, what increases her grief, is, that she thinks it necessary to conceal it.”

“And yet, my dear father, she knows how much I love her, and it is consoling to repose our sorrows in the bosom of friendship.”

“Certainly, when we cannot reproach ourselves with being the authors of them; but Clara is very culpable. A girl who so far forgets the duties of nature and society, as clandestinely to

quit the paternal roof with a young man who has been rejected by her family, deserves to encounter hardships, as the bitter fruits of her disobedience. Parents, my dear Ancelina, know better than their children what is proper to be done, the former having in their favour the experience of age and of reason; they have likewise another motive, of the power and sincerity of which no doubt can be entertained; and that is, the desire of seeing their children happy; while those, on the other hand, solely guided by a fancy which they conceive to be an insurmountable passion, consult nothing beyond levity and imprudence. Such guides can only mislead them, and deep regret becomes the consequence. Alas! it comes frequently too late, the mischief is incurable, and the victim lost. But I do not infer from this," continued Lord Mil-

born, on seeing how much Ancelina was affected, "that Clara is exactly in the situation I have described, and yet I am almost certain that she is not happy. I am the more inclined to believe it, as I do not judge Godwin like a father, who is blind to the faults of his son, and I know that he does not possess any qualifications to make a woman happy. His disposition is naturally flighty, and he is not susceptible of a durable attachment. He is imperious and unsociable; in a word, Ancelina, your brother Godwin is not the kind of man that I should like to see united to Harriot or to you."

"How severely, papa, you judge of my brother!" replied Ancelina, mournfully.

"Can I, do you imagine, be prejudiced against any one of my children?"

“Surely not; but perhaps some of Godwin’s good qualities are not known to you.”

“He has no more of them, than he had of vices, when he left the hall.”

“I hope in God,” said Ancelina, “that he will not give my friend Clara any cause of uneasiness!”

“I sincerely wish it,” replied Lord Milborn, with a sigh; “but I do not think, Ancelina, that it is necessary to urge you to write to that friend.”

“It is a duty that I shall acquit myself of, as soon as I return home.”

“Tell her, then, that we heartily forgive both her and her husband. I shall desire your mother to give you bank-notes for one hundred pounds, which you will inclose in your letter.”

Ancelina kissed the beneficent hand of her father; and, for the first time in her life, felt impatient to leave him.

She longed to write to her dear Clara, and to send her that assistance of which she strongly suspected she was now become in extreme want.

CHAP. XXIV.

CLARA did not let a morning pass without visiting Newgate. She always continued with Godwin three or four hours, and as constantly returned with a heart oppressed by grief and sadness. Her husband's mind seemed to be a perfect representation of the waves of the sea. Sometimes it appeared calm and composed; at others, agitated, boiling, and threatening the approach of a terrible storm. At one moment he threw himself at her feet, implored her pardon for all the miseries she endured, of which he acknowledged himself the only cause; at another, he loaded her

with reproaches, pretending that she had forced him to leave his father's house, and that it was but just she should expiate her fault; frequently, too, did he abuse her for not bringing him money, and threatened to see her no more, if she did not find out the means of obtaining some.

Poor Clara unfortunately reached, at that unhappy moment, the dreaded time of her confinement. It was on her return from seeing Godwin, that she felt her first pains. A single guinea was all that she possessed. Miss Wilson was standing at the parlour door when she came in. Grieved on perceiving the change in her countenance, she inquired anxiously into the cause.

“Oh, my dear Miss Wilson, I fear that I am not far from.....”

“I comprehend you perfectly; but have you engaged a midwife?”

“I do not know one.”

“Deborah, run quickly to our neighbour, and tell her to come here immediately.”

“Do not, my dear Miss Wilson, send for her; I have not.....and.....perhaps I can do without her.”

Although Miss Wilson was deeply affected at Clara's dreadful situation, she could not forbear smiling, at the moment, at her candour.

“Do not torment yourself, Mrs. Milborn,” said she, “upon that head; Mrs. Ending is a friend of mine, and will be happy to assist you. I hope that all your little necessities are prepared.”

“I have,” said Clara, deeply colouring, “made all that I thought indispensable.”

“Very well. We must now think about a nurse; I know one, who is both humane and attentive.”

“Believe me, Miss Wilson, I can do without one.”

“Poor soul!—Leave all those little matters to the care of my friendship.”

“And how am I ever to acquit myself towards you?”

“By taking care of yourself, which can only be done by banishing melancholy ideas. Providence is a good mother; place confidence in her, and all will be right.”

The humane Wilson took Clara by the arm, and led her softly to her chamber; she then placed her on a chair, and ran herself to fetch the nurse. She brought in with her some meat, which she put on the fire to make broth, in order that nothing might be wanting to accommodate the lying-in lady. The midwife shortly after arrived; and before night, Mrs. Milborn had given birth to a strong and healthy boy.

On the following morning, Clara received Ancelina's letter. The resource it contained arrived so opportunely, that Clara, repeated after Miss Wilson, "Providence is a good mother!"—In a week Clara was sufficiently recovered to return to Newgate. She nursed her child, and took it with her, in order to show it to its father. Godwin at first received it with a transport of joy. He took his son in his arms, kissed him, laughed aloud, and ran into all the neighbouring rooms of the prison, to show him to his companions in misery. It was in fact a moment of delirium. But soon succeeded to it black and portentous thoughts. Apparently agonized by reflection, he suddenly threw the child upon his mother's lap, while he exclaimed, "Am I then mad, that I rejoice thus at the birth of this little wretch?—it can be only an additional beggar upon the face of the earth.—

Who, great God!—who will take care to provide for it?”

“Providence,” answered Clara, thinking of Miss Wilson, “is a good mother.”

“A very good one, indeed,” replied Godwin, “who lets her children die of hunger!—Am not I a proof of it?”

“Do not, my love, accuse Providence;—it is not her fault, if.....”

“If I have been fool enough to marry *you*, I suppose you would add.”

Clara coloured, cast down her eyes, and the tears which she could not suppress, rolled down her faded cheeks.

“That Providence,” continued Mr. Milborn, “in whom you seem to place such implicit confidence, ought to have prevented our romantic flight; but, no!—she suffered us to fly to our ruin;—still suffers us to languish in the most consummate misery, and yet I am de-

sired to believe in her existence and her goodness."

"Godwin, my dear Godwin!" replied Clara, "you are at present only unhappy;—beware of becoming guilty.—There, my love, there is what that divine Providence, whom you blaspheme, has sent to our relief;"—showing him at the same time a handful of guineas.—Godwin fell upon his knees, kissed his wife's hand, never troubled himself to inquire how she became possessed of that sum, but begged that she would give it to him, in order, he said, to pay his debts in the prison, which would infallibly procure him fresh credit.

"How many guineas have you there, Clara?" said he.

"Fifty," she replied, which were all that she had taken.

"Well, then," said Godwin, "you must keep five, which will be sufficient to answer all your purposes, as you are

at no expence, and I shall take the other forty-five."

Clara expected this ingratitude, yet still it pained her. The gold remained still in her hand. Godwin took it from her; and left her, as he had proposed, no more than five guineas.—
"Farewell, Clara," said he; "it is time you should be gone. You have staid too long already, considering it is the first time of your being out. Farewell, my dear.—Apropos, what name have you given this young Cupid?"

"Your name, my love."

"Very well, my love; don't come again to-morrow; you must take care of yourself, for the weather is intolerably cold."

He embraced her hastily, and conducted her to the door of the prison.

"Oh, God, what a man!"—exclaimed Clara, as she pensively proceeded towards her solitary home.

“Not an ember remains of that tenderness, which he once swore to me should never know diminution!—Vicious company has ruined him. Poor infant!” she inwardly ejaculated, as she pressed her child to her heart, “you no longer possess a father; vile people have perverted him, and he is no longer himself!”

She had nearly reached her habitation, when, at the corner of a street, she met her brother. An involuntary scream, which terror excited, escaped her.

“Oh! is it you, Clara?” said Evan as he approached her; “I little thought that you were in London.”

“How are my parents?” exclaimed the distressed Clara, without daring to raise her eyes from the ground.

“They curse you, Clara, as well as your infamous seducer.”

“Godwin never seduced me, bro-

ther; our affection was mutual, and it was I who proposed the journey to Scotland."

"If that is the case," replied he, "you are a wretch!"

"Oh, brother!" said Clara, somewhat recovering, "recal your words."

"I will not; I repeat them: you are a wretch!"

"Evan, it is my duty to submit to so foul an epithet from either my father or my mother; but in you it is terribly misplaced."

She pronounced those words with a firmness that discouraged even the ferocious Evan, and then continued her walk. Before, however, she reached her habitation, her strength failed her; Deborah came out at the same moment, which saved her the trouble of knocking at the door; she reached with extreme difficulty the parlour, wherein no one was sitting, upon a chair of

which she threw herself, worn out more by mental agony than by bodily exertion. After a few minutes, she retired to her chamber, where she wept in solitary sorrow.

“Alas! is it then true,” did she inwardly exclaim, “that I am now held by my *own* family in utter abhorrence?—Oh, God! has my father then cursed me?—Will he not, likewise, curse this innocent child?—With what barbarity did my brother reproach me!—Inhuman Evan!—With what an inexorable heart must nature have endowed you!—What a difference, when I compare it to that of my tender and indulgent friend!—how charmingly consoling is her benign letter!—how sweetly delicate every expression contained in it!—Oh beloved, adored Ancelina!—you deserve, and you shall possess my whole confidence;—yes, I will open to you my very soul. You shall become ac-

quainted with the extent of my misery, and I am convinced that you will shed many tears over the fate of your unfortunate friend.”

At the moment of her beginning her letter to Ancelina, little Godwin began to cry, and she flew to appease him with her breast. She was fulfilling this sacred and tender duty in every natural mother, when some one knocked at the door; and, without waiting for permission to enter, her brother Evan stood before her. Not being able to rise, she nodded, and pointed to a chair.

“I am come, Clara,” said Evan, “to inform you of many things, of which you are probably ignorant. Your father-in-law has been three months in prison; he stands accused of a murder that was committed in his garden; fifty witnesses, at least, have deposed against him.”

“Great God!—what are you say-

ing?—Lord Milborn?—Murder?—Impossible!”

“It is a fact though, as the whole country can inform you; your dear father-in-law, Mrs. Milborn, will soon end his career upon a scaffold.”

“Hold, Evan, cruel brother! do not you see that you are drawing blood from my heart!—Poor Godwin!—May you remain for ever ignorant of this dreadful disaster!”—

“But he *must* know it, Clara,” replied Evan, “in order that he may drop the infamous name of Milborn.”

“Cruel Evan!—with what ferocious pleasure you are tearing wider the deep wound you have just given me:—leave me, I beseech you, and do not increase by your presence the misery which you now force me to endure.”

“Get the better of your passion, my pretty sister; and remember, if you please, that Evan is not of the number

of those persons who can be driven imperiously away."

Clara, abashed by her brother's way of speaking, was no longer able to endure the variety of sentiments by which she was agitated. She burst into tears, and sobbed aloud; Miss Wilson, who came in at the moment, overheard her, and ran to her; she drew back at the sight of a stranger, fearing to appear officious, and was hastening out of the room, when Clara, with her infant in her arms, ran up to her, and entreated that she would not desert her. The request being so fervently made, Miss Wilson took a chair by the side of Evan, and inquired of Mrs. Milborn what could be the cause of the distress which seemed to overcome her? As she did not reply, Evan said, rudely, "Speak, Clara, why do you look so frightened? I think you have played the part of an actress long enough. — What, no answer? — Well

then I must speak to this lady for you. I am, Madam, a brother come to reproach a sister for having dishonoured her family, in flying the paternal roof with a man, whose father has been now three months in prison, charged with having committed a most atrocious murder. That is exactly the fact."

"I cannot believe it," replied Clara; "no, Evan, I will not believe it; my husband's father is one of the best of men."

"Say, rather, one of the vilest."

"That's quite sufficient, brother," said Clara, on leaving the room; "I cannot stay longer with you, to hear virtue and goodness thus calumniated."

In vain did Evan endeavour to prolong a conversation with Miss Wilson; she desired him to withdraw.

"I know nothing of you, Sir," said she; "but your conduct gives me a very bad opinion of your heart. I love,

and I esteem Mrs. Milborn, and am sincerely grieved that she has such a brother as you appear to be."

"Thank God!" replied Evan, darting a revengeful look upon Miss Wilson, "I can prove some respect ought to be paid me."

"I fear not your threats," said Miss Wilson, "for I defy you to put them in force;" saying which, she conducted him to the door, and instantly shut him out. As soon as Clara heard Evan go away, she went to Miss Wilson.—"Oh, Madam!" said the latter, "what a man that brother of yours appears to be!—But, as you are married, he has no right to assume any authority over you."

"None," replied Clara; "but he takes upon himself to exercise all. My father and mother idolize him; he has more the command of their house than themselves, and thinks he has a right to compel every one to obey him. He is

imperious, vindictive, and wicked. He hates Mr. Milborn's family, because he was rejected by one of my sisters-in-law; and I am sure there is not a word of truth in all he has said against Lord Milborn; nevertheless, my heart bled at his recital; but what convinces me of the falsehood of the assertion, is a letter which I received within the last week from Ancelina, one of my lord's daughters. She mentions nothing of such a calamity, I must therefore firmly believe that none such exists."

Miss Wilson was of Clara's opinion, who returned to her chamber, in order to write to her friend. She felt it her duty to make her an ample confession of every thing, which she did; and concluded by giving an account of her meeting with Evan, and of what he had so cruelly asserted respecting Lord Milborn.

CHAP. XXV.

LORD MILBORN's process did not gain any ground; every search, however, continued to be made, and the public mind seemed to be influenced by doubt. It was acknowledged possible that his lordship might not be guilty; but it was necessary to discover who was so, and till then, every thing remained involved in mystery. The old informer had undergone several examinations, and his answers were always precisely the same. Another circumstance contributed to inspire the Milborn family with hope: Mr. Bradfort's company, with the six musicians, had quitted

Brough; no one, therefore, remained in the neighbourhood, who had any interest in prosecuting the affair.

A terrible alarm was one morning spread at Hawfield: it was there reported that Lord Milborn had escaped, after murdering the turnkey. No one could, nor would, believe it. On the eve of being acquitted of a most horrible crime, was it likely, they said, that he would be mad enough to escape, under the suspicion of a fresh murder? Every one ran to the prison; not less than a hundred persons were soon assembled there, and they all received a confirmation of the shocking fact. One of the keepers, upon going into the prisoner's room at seven in the morning, as was his custom, found the chamber-door open, together with the body of the turnkey, stabbed in many places with a knife, and lying, lifeless, on the bed. It appeared that Lord Milborn

had destroyed him, in order to get possession of his keys, as not one was to be found in his pocket. Harriot, who slept in a little closet near her father's chamber, had also disappeared.

This dreadful intelligence very soon reached Milborn-Hall, and once more impressed every mind with consternation, and filled every heart with despair. Lady Milborn had seen her husband on the preceding evening, and he had never, since his captivity, appeared to her so composed. Could she believe, then, that he was, at that moment, meditating a flight, which would make his business appear in a far worse light, and occasion fresh misery to his family and friends?—and yet that he was gone was certain. Of his flight, alas! there remained not even the resource of the slightest doubt!—It was then that every one, of whatever class, assumed the right of thinking and of declaring Lord Mil-

born to be one of the most atrocious of characters. The detestation he inspired extended to every individual belonging to him. If a servant from Milborn-Hall went to market, those with whom he had any dealings contemptuously threw to him what he had purchased, and the money that he paid was carefully washed before his face. The faithful Emery and the excellent Diana supported with courage all these insults; persuaded, notwithstanding every appearance, that their lord was innocent; and they resolved, therefore, to devote themselves to his unfortunate family.

Mr. and Mrs. Growell, upon this occasion, gave another proof that their friendship was unalterable. As it was generally known that they continued to visit the culprit's family, all doors became closed against them, and they consoled

themselves by becoming doubly attentive at Milborn-Hall.

It happened, what is usually the case under similar circumstances, that the report of the second murder was received as a convincing proof of the first having been committed by Lord Milborn. His flight, too, testified his criminality. The proceedings were carried on vigorously, and a terrible sentence was soon after the consequence. It was adjudged, that Lord Milborn should be burnt in effigy; that all his property should be confiscated; that the old man, Plunkett, should be restored to liberty; and that a sum of five hundred pounds should be given to him, taken from Lord Milborn's estate, as a compensation and recompence for all he had suffered; which was executed accordingly.

It required supernatural powers to

resist attacks so numerous and unexpected. Lady Milborn fell a victim to them. A violent fever consumed her, and brought her to the verge of the grave. No neighbouring physicians would come near her; the surgeon alone, who had attended Lord Milborn and his children, consented to return to Milborn-Hall; indisposed himself, he could not constantly stay there; but he arrived in time to rescue her from the jaws of death.

A fortnight had passed after the tremendous judgment was pronounced, and Lady Milborn was growing better, when she received intelligence that herself and her family must, in the course of a few days, remove from Milborn-Hall. Mr. Growell proposed their coming to Sumptuous Castle, but Lady Milborn possessed too much delicacy to accept an offer, which she knew must be attended with inconvenience to

her friends. Although her lord's property was wholly confiscated, enough remained settled upon herself to save her from indigence. Alas! she had too many subjects of real affliction, for the loss of three parts of her fortune to cost her a tear!—Alfred and Ancelina knew not what it was to regret that opulence, during the enjoyment of which they had suffered such sharp affliction!

A small house was to be let, about ten miles from Hawfield; the surgeon, who first mentioned it to Lady Milborn, offered his services to make an agreement with the owner: he settled the whole business respecting it on the following day, and the Milborn family quitted their native home time enough to avoid the unhappy sight of the ministers of justice taking possession of it.

The new habitation of this miserable family was denominated Pervious

House. It was plain and neat, and exactly conformable to the situation of the persons who came to reside in it. Its distance from Sumptuous Castle being considerably greater than from Milborn-Hall, would have furnished sufficient apology from friends less warmly attached than Mr. and Mrs. Growell, for not coming so frequently; but, as they differed widely from others, the distance of five or six miles did not create the smallest difficulty; it could, they said, affect only the horses, and, as they had a considerable number, whose present duties were confined to eating, drinking, sleeping, and airing, they were sure of journeying from Sumptuous Castle to Pervious House, without fatigue or difficulty.

Four days after the family's arrival at their new residence, Alfred set out in search of his father and his sister. He carried with him nothing more than

his mother's blessing, and every heartfelt wish of Ancelina. Of the little that remained for his family, he would not take even a share. Mr. Growell, who became informed of his intention, requested his acceptance of a hundred guineas; but Alfred possessed too much honour to receive, as a loan, a sum that he thought it likely he should never be able to repay; and he was too proud to consent to receive, as a present, that which he could possibly dispense with. His mother desired that he would, at least, take a horse; but that he positively refused: it was, therefore, on foot, clothed in the plainest way, and with only ten guineas in his pocket, that Alfred began his uncertain journey without knowing when, or, indeed, if he should ever more see his unfortunate family. His fixed and only intention was, never to discontinue his researches until he had found both his

father and Harriot. Their flight excited in his disordered mind the most extraordinary and the most disquieting ideas. His heart and his head were alike tormented. Often did he conceive strange suspicions; often, too, did he feel conscious that his mind was wandering; he found he must either unravel the mystery, or sink beneath it.

To this situation was now reduced the late numerous, brilliant, and happy Milborn family; which now consisted but of two persons, Lady Milborn and Ancelina. The rest were wanderers, without asylum, without friends, without resource..... In Lady Milborn's present melancholy situation, how could she send assistance to Godwin?—Those two imprudent young people were, she believed, exposed to want. How deeply afflicting became the idea to the heart of a mother!

It was at this disastrous moment that

Clara's long and detailed letter, written to Ancelina, was brought to Pervious House. The old porter still continued at Milborn-Hall, and regularly sent to the family every thing that was addressed there.

What a new subject of grief to Miss Milborn and her mother, to know, that not only Godwin and his wife were experiencing every calamity of which poverty is the parent, but to know also that young Milborn languished out his days in a captivity, of which they could not foresee the end, Clara having written to them, that he had detainers against him for upwards of fifteen hundred pounds, a sum that must now appear enormous to the whole family! —

Maternal affection gave to Lady Milborn the courage to proceed in an undertaking, upon which nothing else could have determined her. This was to speak to Mr. and Mrs. Growell upon

the subject of their children's situation, and to endeavour to persuade them to send some relief. Alas! even that measure produced not the smallest effect. Clara's father and mother repeated, with dreadful imprecations, the oath they had taken, never to send them one penny, could that poor piece of money prolong the days of both. What could Lady Milborn say to a resolution so firmly adhered to?—She could only deplore the fate of the victims to a resolution so cruel, and weep, while she related her bad success to her daughter.

Emery received from his lady an order to go to the principal town, to sell some jewels which she had still retained. The honest creature brought back five hundred pounds, which were sent immediately to Clara. Ancelina informed her how her mother had procured that sum, with which she hoped it might be possible for her brother to

procure his enlargement; especially if all his creditors turned out to be such abominable usurers as that which she had mentioned in her letter, who had obliged him to give a bond for a hundred guineas, for the loan of eighteen. Ancelina acknowledged that Evan's relation was but too true; but she did not mention the trial, the condemnation, or any other particular. She was not surprised, she said, at Evan's barbarous conduct towards a sister, more unfortunate than guilty, and she conjured Clara not to receive him at her house; and to avoid, as much as possible, meeting him elsewhere. She took care not to mention the unnatural oath taken by Mr. and Mrs. Growell; and she concluded by assuring Clara of the most sincere attachment and the most unalterable friendship.

As Clara had in her letter diminished the number of Godwin's faults, or

had rather only mentioned those which circumstances seemed to render excusable, Ancelina flattered herself that her brother continued to be a good and an affectionate husband. Great would have been her affliction and that of Lady Milborn, had they known how highly culpable his conduct was become, in every fatal instance!—Their ignorance in that respect, saved them many painful, and even agonizing reflections.

CHAP. XXVI.

CLARA, in strict compliance with her husband's wishes, did not return until the third day to Newgate. Godwin received her very kindly, and seemed to be uncommonly cheerful. He frequently caressed his child, and once or twice embraced its mother. Tenderly gazing upon her, "You are a gentle creature," he said, "Clara, and I have caused you a world of sorrow!—yet your heart has never given room to resentment: you cannot think, my dear, of what infinite service those five and forty guineas were to me."—He paced the room in wild disorder.—"They think

me here, Clara," continued he, "a perfect Cræsus, and they all offer me credit."

"Do not make use of it," replied Clara; "lest you should not be able afterwards to repay it."

"That is what I wished to speak to you about," answered Godwin; "you must endeavour, my dear, to renew that sum every month."

"Gracious heaven! how could such an idea ever enter your mind?—Why, do you not know that we shall henceforth be without resource?"

"Not entirely so, as you have already found out that."

"And do you suppose that your sister, Ancelina, can, or will in future be at so much expence?"

"Oh, it was Ancelina then who sent you the fifty guineas!"

"Yes, my dear, who else would have had that delicate attention?"

Godwin seemed lost in thought: then, drawing nearer to his wife, and taking her hand, "Surely, my dear Clara, you have not spent the five guineas that I left you!"

"Not quite; but why do you ask me?"

"Because you would oblige me by returning two; upon my soul, I have not a shilling."

"Good heaven, Godwin!—what can you have done with all that money?"

"Why, one should suppose from that, you were talking of two or three million. What, pray, are five and forty miserable guineas?—A mere trifle!"

"My dear Godwin, you are losing the use of your reason; the people with whom you associate are your ruin."

"What, another sermon?—I have told you already, Clara, that I will neither hear of remonstrances nor advice.

If you have about you, what I ask for, I command you to give it me, without preamble or delay."

"There," said Clara, drawing two guineas from her pocket, "there are the means of existence for your wife and child for several days!"—

"A curse upon a progeny totally useless, and only expensive to me!"

"Godwin, cruel Godwin!—do you curse your child?"—and the tears ran in torrents down her cheeks.

"You know, Mrs. Milborn, that your tears, far from affecting me, excite my indignation; endeavour not to let me see any more of them: this is the time that I expect my friends; the sight of you, in your present situation, would only give birth to unpleasant thoughts, disagreeable to yourself, and mortifying to me. You had better, therefore, withdraw before they arrive. If you come to see me every two days,

it will be quite enough. The walk more frequently, in your present weak state, would be too fatiguing."

"I will do every thing you wish," replied Clara, as she arose. Godwin embraced her, and uttered the word "Farewell."

"What, not one kiss for poor little Godwin?"

"I had forgotten him; farewell child!—farewell Clara."

Unhappy Mrs. Milborn! to what a heart have you sacrificed your fortune and your happiness! Why did you not become the wife of the young and the excellent Modbury?—Felicity would have been the recompense of your submission to the will of your parents; you would have been beloved by your family, happy in your establishment, the father of your children would have blessed them on their birth, and the world would have esteemed you. Mothers would

have distinguished you as a pattern for their daughters, and your days would have passed in peace and happiness! Oh, youthful people!—will nothing restrain your following your own imprudent inclinations!—Cannot so many deplorable examples suffice to you as lessons?

Godwin had, even before the loss of his liberty, contracted the vice of intemperance. Since his being in prison, he had never known one day's sobriety; on the contrary, he had never possessed a rational moment. Clara, who only saw him in the morning, observed him to be constantly stupified, but little suspected that the remainder of the day was passed in a manner so totally disgusting. The friends and acquaintance of young Milborn were the scum of that society, of which large towns are always composed.

Wine frequently gives to those, who

drink it to excess, a degree of hilarity and good humour, which they sometimes do not possess when sober. With Godwin its effect was quite different. As soon as his head became heated, he was rude, quarrelsome, and dangerous. The day after Clara's last visit, he sought a dispute with a young man who was the friend and visitor of a prisoner, and, according to custom, Godwin loaded him with invectives. The other upbraided him with some terrible truths, and reproached him with being the son of a murderer, who had already received in effigy the just punishment of his crimes. Godwin was totally ignorant of the misfortunes that had befallen his family; Clara had neither mentioned to him her having seen Evan, nor the dreadful recital he had given her. In the first place, she believed it to be false, and had she thought otherwise, she was too much attached to her

husband to communicate to him intelligence so shocking. We may judge then of the effect it had upon him, from the lips of a stranger.—“Villain!” exclaimed Godwin, “you are an infamous liar; do you know who I am, that you thus dare to class me among thieves like yourself?”

“You are Godwin Milborn, son of the lord of that name,” calmly replied the young man, “and I repeat it, your father is a scoundrel, more dishonoured by his guilt than by its punishment.”

Godwin ran to the table, and snatched up a plate, which he threw violently at the head of his antagonist. It was easy for the other to parry the blow from a man more than half drunk. He snatched up a bottle of wine, which he aimed so exactly, that it hit Godwin in the middle of his forehead, which it fractured. In a moment he was deluged in his blood, and fainted. The

young man prudently stole out of the prison, for the wound was instantly pronounced mortal by a surgeon, who had been immediately sent for. He dressed it, however; after the operation, the surgeon restored him to life, but not to reason. The membranes of the brain being affected, a high fever and delirium were the consequence. Godwin's false friends united in asserting that it was himself only who was in fault, observing that he had provoked the stranger to that act of violence. The people belonging to the prison made every possible inquiry after him without effect; all the prisoners declared that they did not know him, and even he who, at the beginning of the dinner had called him his friend, now persisted, with the rest, that it was the first time he had ever seen him.

During the night, the danger increased so rapidly, that in the morning

it was deemed necessary to send for Mrs. Milborn. Clara flew upon the wings of affection, and found her husband at the last extremity. He had not the least knowledge of her, and expired in her arms, without having pronounced a single word since the shocking accident. The susceptible reader may judge of the deep distress of Mrs. Milborn. She was placed in a coach, and conducted home quite senseless. Miss Wilson received her with a mother's anxiety. The person who went with her, returned immediately; the coachman had heard at the prison-gate of the loss the lady had sustained, as well as the particulars of her husband's misfortune. He related them to Miss Wilson's maid, who ran to tell her mistress, then busy in undressing her lodger. Miss Wilson found that the interest she took in Clara increased every hour, and she resolved never to

forsake her as long as her care and attentions could possibly be of use to her.

Mrs. Milborn breathed, she opened her eyes, but she neither saw nor heard. She was in fact, a living automaton. Her countenance was the image of the most fixed insensibility. Miss Wilson was agonized by her inconceivable situation.—“God grant,” exclaimed her friend, “that she may shed tears, for nothing else can save her!”

At that moment little Godwin cried for nourishment. Miss Wilson ran to him, took him in her arms, and endeavoured to quiet him. It immediately struck her that the sight of the infant would make some impression upon the mother’s heart, and she placed him upon Clara’s knees, who did not appear to see him. He continued crying; Miss Wilson then held him to his mother’s breast. Nature in a moment resumed her rights:

Clara knew her child, and recollected the death of her husband. The blow was too severe; she wept and sobbed bitterly, and gave herself up to the most heart-breaking lamentations. Miss Wilson shared her grief, and did not, at the moment, attempt to offer consolation. What could she have said, that she was then in a situation to attend to?—Time only can subdue heavy afflictions. I know of nothing more disgustingly preposterous than those foolishly-officious people, who, in the first moments of distress, pretend to convince you that it is wrong to afflict yourself, since the evil is past; that you must make up your mind to it; and that it is your duty in this life to view the worst events with the eyes of philosophy*.

* This word, in its natural acceptation, expresses a being who possesses neither soul nor sensibility. Seeing, a few days since, a lady laughing,

Clara could not reconcile herself to the idea that she was never more to behold her beloved Godwin; that the man for whose sake she had sacrificed every thing, should be torn from her for ever!—The constant zeal and friendship of Miss Wilson, and the

and playing in her garden, I could not suppress my surprise, I may say my indignation, which I communicated to an inhabitant of the house. ‘Is it possible,’ said I, ‘that Mrs. * * *, can be so lively the second day after her husband’s death?’—‘Oh,’ replied the person to whom I addressed myself, ‘she is a philosopher.’—Another act of philosophy. Mrs. G * * * * had just lost her mother; I went to her on the third day, to mingle my tears with her’s, as her mother was my most intimate friend. I was going into the house, the porter stopped me: ‘You cannot see my mistress, Madam,’ said he; ‘she has not been three hours in bed.’ It was then eleven in the morning. ‘Poor soul!’ I replied, ‘what, then she has been in tears the whole night!’—‘I don’t think so, Madam,’ replied the porter; ‘for she was the whole night at the masquerade.’—‘Oh, heaven!’ exclaimed I; ‘You know, Madam,’ replied the porter, ‘that *my* lady is a philosopher.’

sight of her child, did not for a long time give peace to her mind, but she was possessed of sufficient reason to endure with resignation the enormous load of her calamities.

She now felt that it was her duty to write to her father; Miss Wilson, whom she consulted, advised her to do so. "It is a measure," said she, "more in favour of your child than of yourself, for I am determined, as long as you continue to be unhappy, to share with you my little fortune."

Mrs. Milborn acknowledged with tears this new proof of attachment in her friend.—"Dear and respectable Miss Wilson!" said she, as she fell upon her neck, "I will joyfully accept the proposal that puts it in my power to be always with you. I hope my parents will consent to settle a trifle upon my fatherless child, that your expences may be rendered less considerable; but if

they refuse me, I will take refuge in your bosom; dispose of me as you please; I shall ever love and respect you, as I would my mother and my sister."

The letter to Mr. Growell contained the particulars of the disastrous end of Godwin. Clara implored her father and mother, if they would not receive her, of which she felt persuaded, that they would not refuse to stretch out a saving hand to their grandchild, who was aged three months.

She did not long wait for an answer. Mr. Growell began his letter by imprecating curses, both upon her and her infant; he forbade her ever presuming to appear before his eyes, protesting that she should never receive any assistance either from her mother or himself. He ended his inhuman letter by saying, that he would provide for her child, upon condition that she would never,

during her life, lay claim to him, and that she would even forget that he existed. On that condition, and that only, he said, he would take him, bring him up, and settle something upon him. He had resolved, he added, to receive from her only one more letter, in which she was either to accept or to refuse his proposal; in the former case, he would send a nurse to London, to bring the child to his house.

On the reception of that letter, Clara exclaimed against her father's unnatural barbarity; then straining her child to her breast, as if fearful they were coming to force him away, "No, no," said she, "never will I, Miss Wilson, part with this, my only treasure."

Miss Wilson, who had not yet heard of the contents of the letter, inquired whether any one wished to take care of her child.—"My father, my friend,

is cruel enough to But there, read that letter."

Miss Wilson revolted at the inhumanity of Mr. Growell, and wished to know Clara's intentions.

"To preserve my child," she replied. "Alas! without him, could I, would I support the burthen of existence?" Miss Wilson tenderly embraced her.—"Excellent mother," said she, "heaven must and will reward you!—Write to your unnatural father; tell him, that no consideration shall ever induce you to part with your child;—tell him, too, that you have a friend, a humble one indeed, but whose inheritance will be sufficient to leave the little Godwin Milborn in a situation that shall place him above being troublesome to any of his family.—She instantly wrote, and sent off her answer.

On the following day Ancelina's let-

ter arrived. Oh, what tears were shed on its perusal! It was true then that Lord Milborn stood convicted of a horrible crime!—she could no longer doubt it; Evan's account was not dictated by calumny. No one in the prison having been cruel enough to inform Clara of the occasion of the quarrel that had caused Godwin's death, she had always supposed that her brother Evan had deceived her; but Ancelina's detail could not admit of the slightest doubt. She supposed that the dreadful calamity had completely ruined her father-in-law. What did she not owe to Lady Milborn, for the sacrifice she had made to release her husband from prison; but, now that he was in the grave, ought she, could she accept a sum which might be useful to his father?

Clara went to her friend, in whom she placed the most implicit confidence, showed her Ancelina's letter, and re-

requested her advice, how she was to act respecting the five hundred pounds.

“As you condescend, my dear Mrs. Milborn,” replied she, “to consult me, I will tell you exactly what I think. Misfortune seems to have laid a heavy hand upon your husband’s family; you would evince but little delicacy were you to keep the whole of the sum, as you can no longer make the use of it that was first intended; send back four hundred and fifty pounds, keep the fifty into which you have broken; I have exactly a hundred in my drawers, which will enable us to leave London, and we must carefully avoid your brother Evan’s discovering our retreat. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Milborn, but indeed, I hold him in abhorrence. His countenance, his look, his manner, in short, every thing about him displeases me. I will tell you, besides, what you do not know, that, for several days past,

Deborah has observed him to pass by the door, and to look up at the windows with a menacing air."

"Perhaps," replied the terrified Clara, "he is watching his opportunity to rob me of my child."

"God knows his intentions, but I fear they are not good."

"Let us quit this fatal town, my friend," replied Clara, "I have suffered already too much in it!"

Miss Wilson went on the following morning for her brother, whom she empowered to receive some money that was due to her, and to watch, during her absence, that no mischief was done to her house. The ladies then began to make preparations for their journey. A post-chaise was ordered for the same night, at the hour of twelve. The reason of which was, their wishing to avoid being followed. Clara wrote during the day to Ancelina, and inclosed four

hundred and fifty pounds, requesting her to assure Lady Milborn, that what she had retained was sufficient for her wants. She gave a full account of the death of her beloved husband, informed her of her approaching departure, and of her reasons for keeping it secret. Nor did she conceal from Ancelina the letter she had written to her father, inclosing a copy of his answer. She then spoke highly of the happiness she experienced in possessing so valuable a friend as Miss Wilson, and promised to write again as soon as they should find themselves quietly and comfortably settled.

CHAP. XXVII.

THE reader will have the goodness to return to a few foregoing chapters, and to remember that, in the twenty-fifth, an account is given of the moment in which Lord Milborn and his daughter Harriot escaped from the prison at Hawfield. The corpse of the turnkey, which was stabbed in many places, being found in his chamber, was sufficient evidence to prove that Lord Milborn had taken away that man's life, in order to procure his own liberty. The sentence which condemned him to death was universally approved, and he was, as I have already mentioned, executed in effigy.

Oh, judges! how dreadful must be the duty you have to fulfil, when an innocent person becomes a victim to the apparent proofs of a crime he has never committed?—From conscience, indeed, you can suffer no reproach; you have only obeyed the letter of the law; but your lips have pronounced sentence of death against a man of honour; your hearts must bleed:—day and night must your minds be tortured:—no longer repose, no longer sweet sleep can comfort you. Oh, judges! I repeat, unfortunate judges! how dreadful must be the duty you have to fulfil!

Lady Milborn had passed the best part of the day in the prison at Hawfield, and had left her lord, if not happy, at least easy and patient. His lordship had, according to custom, embraced Harriot at ten in the evening, and wished her good night as he con-

ducted her to the door of her closet. They were both in bed, and slept soundly, when the noise of the locks and the bars disturbed Lord Milborn. He was not a little surprised on perceiving the turnkey, with a candle in his hand, enter his room, followed by two men, whose faces were covered by black crape. The prisoner shuddered. — “Get up,” said the turnkey, “we are going to rescue both your life and your honour. To-morrow you are to be tried and condemned.....”

“I will not,” replied Lord Milborn, “take to flight:—the guilty alone wish to escape; the innocent must place confidence in the integrity of their cause, and in the justice of their judges. I wait, without terror or apprehension, every thing that may be pronounced against me.”

The three witnesses became evidently abashed, and gazed upon each other

with a look of astonishment. After a moment's reflection, one of the unknown seized Lord Milborn, stopped his mouth with a handkerchief, rolled him up in the sheets, and they both led him to a carriage, which stood a few steps from the prison door. One of these villains remained to secure him, and the other re-entered the prison with the jailor. To avoid length of time, they took the same measures with Harriot. As they had closed both her mouth and her eyes, she could neither see nor speak. She only felt that she was carrying off. She was placed in the carriage by the side of her father. One of the ravishers said to the jailor, at the moment that he was going to step into the coach, for he wished to fly with his accomplices, that he had forgotten to take Lord Milborn's port-folio, in which, perhaps, might be found some papers that would lead to betray them. As

the candle in the lantern was still burning, the jailor went on before to light him; they had scarcely reached the jailor's room before he ran a knife into the jailor's breast, who fell, uttering a feeble cry. His infamous companion plunged the murderous instrument into several parts of the body, as it lay extended on the ground. As soon as he was convinced that it contained life no longer, he laid it upon Lord Milborn's bed, and then examined whether his lordship had left any jewels, or papers, or money. He found only a plain, neat watch, four guineas, and some letters from Lady Milborn and the children. After having put all these into his pocket, he went out of the room, and quitted the prison. Taking the precaution to secure the jailor's keys, he shut the large house-door, and went back to the carriage, which, as soon as he had entered it, was driven

off with astonishing velocity. When they had travelled about two hours, the prisoners were relieved from the handkerchiefs which had prevented their breathing freely. The moon shone bright, and Lord Milborn could perceive that the villains were armed. The one who seemed to command the other, showed a brace of pistols to the prisoners. "The first of you who moves or speaks," said he, in a menacing tone, "shall have their brains blown out."—The injunction, however, was needless, for Lord Milborn was not weak enough to endeavour to resist two strong men, particularly having on no other clothing than a sheet; and the trembling Harriot had neither power nor inclination to explain any part of the dismal sensations she experienced.

This cruel and melancholy journey lasted till near six o'clock in the morning. The carriage then drove into a

court. The villains hastened to cover again the eyes of the prisoners, who were led, one after the other, into the same chamber, which was large, and its windows barred.

It was a great consolation both to the father and daughter, to find that they were not separated from each other.

A man with his face uncovered brought them coarse provisions, coarse linen, and peasants' dresses. Harriot did not cease weeping, and Lord Milborn was deeply afflicted, not so much on account of his change of captivity, as on the opinion that would be formed respecting his disappearing at the moment when his dreadful misfortune was taking a favourable turn; and the excess of grief it would occasion to his wife and children, added still more to the horrors of his situation.

Three months passed without the prisoners having the most distant hope

of a termination to their miseries. They generally conversed upon the extreme severity of fate against them, they mutually questioned each other from whence such cruelties could arise, who were those enemies powerful enough to employ such infernal machinations, and how they, who had never committed an act of injustice with which they could reproach themselves, should become the constant sport of such implacable hatred? In vain did they run over the names and characters of all their acquaintance; not one of them could excite so foul a suspicion. Harriot wished to persuade her father to fix upon Evan—"He is," said she, "believe me, papa, a most atrocious villain; he is capable, I am sure, of the most enormous crimes."

"You judge him too severely, my dear: no, never can I believe that the

son of our best friends can be a consummate villain."

"I never can be persuaded but that he was privy to the carrying off my mother, and that it was himself who wounded my brother Alfred, when he came to my assistance."

"My dear Harriot, your aversion to him misleads you, and converts his faults into crimes. I acknowledge that he has nothing amiable about him; but I cannot suppose that he is capable of wilfully doing wrong."

Harriot, unwilling to contradict her father, resolved to avoid in future giving any further opinion respecting Mr. Growell's son.

Since their arrival in their new prison, they had always received their provisions from the same man. One day, at the usual hour of bringing them, the door opened, and, instead of the customary jailor, there came in two wo-

men, who wore long and thick veils, and who were followed by the jailor. The women placed themselves upon two chairs opposite the prisoners, and examined them attentively in silence. The extreme ugliness of Lord Milborn's face formed a striking contrast with the uncommon beauty of his daughter. The curiosity of these unknown seemed to increase every moment; for they ceased not to examine alternately both father and daughter. They made a sign to the jailor, who stood near them; which he understanding, approached, and attempted to embrace Harriot: she flew for refuge into her father's arms, who pushed the insolent keeper with violence.—“It is in vain,” said the wretch, “that you hope to save your daughter from dishonour; she must, and shall, be *my* property.”

“That shall be only after you have

taken my life," replied the unfortunate father, pressing his miserable girl more closely to his breast. "Vile wretch!" continued he, "beware of approaching a single step nearer to her; if you do, I will at once annihilate your existence."

The man smiled contemptuously.

"And you!" continued Lord Milborn, "you who are the dumb witnesses of this revolting scene, who seem to enjoy this heart-breaking treatment, say, what have I ever done to you?—what injury have you ever sustained from my unfortunate family?—Your sex used to be the model of goodness, meekness, and indulgence. How came you now to appear before us with the ferocity of tigers and the cruelty of executioners?—If, without knowing it, I have deserved your hatred, sacrifice me only to your resentment; leave in peace my

respectable wife and my poor children."

"No, no, vengeance until death!" replied one of the women, in a loud voice.

"Perish all the Milborns to the very last, in disgrace and torments!" cried the other.

Each seemed to have something in her mouth, which impeded pronunciation, and affected the organs of speech.

"Great God!" said Lord Milborn, "what savage fury! what then is my crime, and when did I render myself guilty?"

No answer was made.—Harriot fell on her knees, and, with uplifted hands, implored them to pardon her unfortunate father!

"Never! never!" exclaimed both, rising; "to aggravate all your sufferings will be our most joyful occupation. Farewell; we shall soon meet again."

“Mercy! mercy!” repeated Harriot with the most poignant grief; but the women did not attend to her, and went out, followed by the jailor.

Lord Milborn lifted up his daughter, and conjured her to tranquillize her mind. “Oh, father, father!—the ruin of us all is then determined upon, those wretched women have sworn to it. My God! my God!—what shall we do?—what will become of us?—You heard the horrible menace of the jailor; he obeys those furies, who breathe only horror and destruction. Father, take courage enough to kill me; it is the only way of saving me from infamy. Death is now the sole object I have in view.”

“Dear, unhappy child!—you are tearing open the deepest wound in my heart!—Let us reflect;—perhaps fate will afford us some opportunity of escaping our murderers. But never

more, Harriot, speak to me of taking away your life; the bare idea is enough to turn my brain!"

During the remainder of the day, Harriot gave herself up to despair, and refused to touch any of the food which her father presented to her.

The next day, when the jailor brought the dinner, Harriot uttered the most piercing cries, and was seized with a violent fit of trembling. The ferocious wretch appeared almost affected by the condition to which that poor young creature was reduced, and, speaking in a softer tone than formerly, begged of her to be composed; for that he would not use violence against her, unless he received fresh orders. His discourse was not very consoling; but as it announced a reprieve, it gave Lord Milborn the opportunity of offering comfort and consolation to the distracted mind of Harriot.

For a whole month, the jailor did not quit the usual routine of his employment. Lord Milborn and his daughter began to flatter themselves that their barbarous enemies would at length relent, and put a period to their hitherto indefatigable persecutions. Sleep, which had for a long time deserted the agitated Harriot, now seemed willing to return to her. She was one night in the full enjoyment of its benign influence, when the noise made by some one's opening her door, awoke her in terror. Heaven! what did she feel upon seeing one of her female persecutors, accompanied by the jailor, and another man with a mask, enter her chamber!—The same man, she judged by his size and make, from whom her brother had delivered her in the wood near Milborn-Hall. She uttered piercing shrieks upon perceiving him. Lord Milborn flew, with nothing on but

his shirt, to his daughter's bed-side; when, leaning over her, "Infamous agents of the most execrable of women!" cried he, "do you think that, while the heart of Milborn continues to beat, you can ever approach his daughter?—I will lose the last drop of that blood, which you seem so much to thirst for, in her defence!"

CHAP. XXVIII.

READER, we must now go back in our history. Retrace in your memory the conclusion of the ninth chapter, and you will recollect that Mr. Growell's youngest son, Gideon, with a commission which his father had purchased for him, embarked to join the English army, which was then fighting against the Americans.

His voyage was short and prosperous, concerning which Gideon neither thought nor cared. Devoted solely to the regret of having quitted, perhaps for ever, the only being he either could or would love, he carried grief and de-

spair in his heart. In entering the service, he had the double motive of being useful to his country, and of meeting with the only remedy he wished for, death.

I shall not enter into any detail respecting that war, which was disastrous to both parties, and which, I believe, did not a little contribute to the too-celebrated revolution of France. But as mine is not the pen of an historian, I will decline all reflection. I will speak only of young Growell, and say, that he conducted himself with a bravery, which, from being common to the English nation, is not, therefore, the less to be extolled. He distinguished himself upon several occasions, and, what ought still further to insure him universal admiration, he was never forgetful that the people against whom he fought were his brethren. Excepting, therefore, on the field of battle, where,

unhappily, every act of humanity is too generally proscribed, Gideon defended and assisted the Americans. He saved a great deal of the property of the women; and the men that he commanded never abandoned themselves to those excesses of which troops are usually inclined to become guilty.

I must not omit noticing, that on his receiving orders to go with fifty men, for the purpose of harassing the enemy, he conducted himself with so much prudence and valour, that the general thought proper to promote him immediately. His captain being killed, the company was presented to him. As this favour seemed to be in fact a right that was due, no person testified any jealousy at the advancement of Gideon, who thought himself now doubly engaged to sacrifice his life for the service of his king.

Peace, that inexpressible blessing of

Heaven, was at last concluded between two nations that should never have composed but one, and whose divisions had caused so much blood to be shed. Gideon re-embarked, with a part of his regiment, on board a transport named the Conqueror. Young Growell both feared and wished to return to England: perhaps he should find Ancelina married; and, suppose that she was not, could he flatter himself that his father, who had expressed himself so imperiously on the subject, would ever consent to an union with the daughter of his friend?—"He told me that he had other intentions," said Gideon within himself; "but let him not suppose that I will add to the misery of not having the woman I love, the additional one of becoming the husband of another!—My resolution is taken: either Ancelina must be mine, or I will never marry whilst I live."

At the expiration of an absence of three years, Gideon returned to his native country. The fatigues of both body and mind had made a considerable alteration in his features, but he brought back the heart and the disposition with which nature had gifted him. The former, faithful, kind, and susceptible; the latter, even, obliging, and anxious to do every thing that was right. He arrived at Sumptuous Castle one day when Mrs. Growell was alone. Her husband and Aurea had gone the preceding day to Pervious House, and were not to return until the day following. Gideon flew to embrace his mother, who received him as a mere acquaintance whom she had not seen for some time. She left the room, and, returning shortly, asked him various questions relative to what had interested him during his absence. He informed her with sincerity of every thing,

even of his exploits. With parents, modesty would be, in that case, misplaced. Why conceal that which ought naturally to create so much pleasure? —Mrs. Growell listened to her son, and could not avoid feeling a sentiment of pride on learning that he had gained the esteem of the men, the friendship of his brother officers, and the favour of his commander. Yet, notwithstanding the sort of pleasure that her countenance expressed, an attentive observer might have perceived that she experienced vexation and anxiety, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal.

Gideon had already inquired whether his father, brother, and sisters were at home. Mrs. Growell merely replied that all the family, excepting herself, were with Lady Milborn. She was without doubt fearful of afflicting Gideon, and therefore left it to his father to inform him of the misfortunes of

their friends, and of Clara's marriage. The dinner hour arrived, but Gideon experienced so much agitation both in his mind and in his heart, that he could not eat. His mother, who was only apparently composed, and who trembled for her son's sensibility when they came to explications, said nothing on the subject, so that they both quitted the table exactly as they had sat down to it.

Towards night, Mr. Growell returned home. The moment he entered the house, his son ran to meet him, and was received by him with great tenderness. Mrs. Growell hastened to inquire of him whether he had left all his children with Lady Milborn: he comprehended her intention, and simply answered, "Yes." Gideon was requested by his mother to relate the interesting details which she had already heard. Gideon hastened to obey her; the time

elapsed, and Mr. Growell himself conducted his son to his chamber.

At the moment that Gideon, the next morning, was descending to the breakfast-room, Mr. Growell went up to him. "It is particularly fortunate for me, Gideon," said his father, "that you are arrived at this time; for I should have been obliged to undertake a fatiguing journey, which would now become doubly so, on account of my age and infirmities. You must take my place, and my interests will be then in as good hands as in my own."

Gideon waited in silence the conclusion of a preamble, which, without his being able to account for it, made him shudder.

His father continued:—"You must go to my estate in the principality of Wales. I have received an account of a disagreeable business there, which might, if improperly managed, cost me

one half of my property. No time is to be lost; a day, an hour, perhaps, would occasion an irreparable calamity."

"What then, Sir, I am but just returned home, and you already wish to drive me from you!"

"You will very soon return," replied Mr. Growell; "the business cannot detain you above a month."

"But let me beg of you to permit me to remain here a few days."

"I have already told you, that the least delay may be attended with fatal consequences; and, but for your arrival, I should have been at this time more than four hours on the road. A chaise is at this moment waiting for you; let us go to your mother, we shall breakfast together, and you must then take your leave. There is a letter for the porter at the castle, near Haverfordwest; it contains the particulars of

what you are to do. John will accompany you; he is very careful and attentive; he has not been many days in my service, but his character has been long known to me."

Mr. Growell, as has been already remarked, had ever accustomed his children to the strictest obedience. Gideon resigned himself to this new trial, and departed from Sumptuous Castle without having been permitted to see either his brother or his sisters, whom he supposed at Milborn-Hall, and, what appeared to him still more cruel, without knowing what was become of Ancelina. Since his arrival he had been so constantly importuned, both by his father and his mother, that it was impossible for him to lead to any subject whatever, neither could he find an opportunity of speaking privately to any servant belonging to the house.

He passed the first minutes of his journey in reflecting upon his painful situation. All at once a pleasing idea entered his mind: "The business," thought he, "in which my father employs me, is, he says, of such vast importance, that it affects more than one half of his property, which is accounted very considerable. If, therefore, I succeed, it is possible that he may consent to my marrying the charming Anceлина."—Natural reasoning for a young man, who knows but little, or rather nothing, of the human heart!—In vain he questioned John, who could only answer, "I have been so short a time, Sir, in your family, that I am not capable to inform you about any thing concerning it."

Towards night, John inquired of his master whether he did not propose to sleep somewhere.

“I know not,” replied Gideon; “and yet I feel tired.”

“You will lose a great deal of time, Sir, if you sleep at an inn; and Mr. Growell is afraid of your arriving in Wales too late.”

“Your observation is just; I will not stop until I reach Haverfordwest. Have you taken care to provide us some provisions?”

“I have enough, Sir, to last till to-morrow noon, and then I can easily replenish.”

Gideon took some refreshment, then stretched out his legs, and fell asleep. He was awakened by the report of a pistol, opened his eyes, and perceived poor John fall out of the chaise-door as it was opened. Two men laid hold of Gideon, forced him out of the carriage, and bore him into another near it. Young Growell perceived the body

of his faithful attendant, which the villains brutally threw into a ditch. He heard the lamentable cries of the postillion who drove him, but he was so closely held, that it was impossible for him to go to the relief of either. As soon as he was placed in the second carriage, the men got into it; they carefully put up the blinds, and it drove off. Gideon could not guess whether he was continuing his journey or returning homewards. The night was dark; and, besides that, every thing was so closely shut, that he could not possibly distinguish any object.

At day-break, he could perceive; through the joints of the blinds, that his conductors were armed with pistols, which they held in their hands. Gideon, judging that all inquiry would be useless, abstained from making any. They offered him refreshments, which he refused.

During a journey of eighteen hours, the horses were changed four times, and it was then that the villains redoubled their vigilance to prevent Gideon from making any resistance. Each man held a pistol within an inch of his head, which they placed on their knees only while the horses were going fast.

It was late at night when the carriage stopped, and they then informed him that he had reached the end of his journey. They obliged him to descend, and to go into a house of mean appearance. The two men walked on each side of him, and a woman, who had opened the door, went before with a candle; they proceeded up a walk which led into a small court. There the woman lifted up a trap-door, which concealed a stair-case: she went down. Gideon, shuddering, followed her. Arrived on the last step, the woman opened a door, and they found

themselves in a cave, which formed a sort of passage.---“ Great God!” exclaimed Gideon, “ whither are you conducting me ?”

“ Wait,” replied the woman, “ you will not find yourself so badly off.”

She then put a key into another door, which opened into a barricaded room, decently furnished, containing several necessary things, and a good bed.

“ I hope you will not complain of us,” said the woman; “ for my part, I have done all that I could to make you comfortable.”

“ But I want to know by what authority, and by whose order you detain me here,” said Gideon. “ Recollect that my father will soon become acquainted with my having disappeared, and that he will neither spare money nor endeavours to find me. Take my advice; be prudent enough to release

me, and I swear to you, upon my honour, that I will never attempt to revenge myself upon your inconceivable atrocity."

"We neither fear your father nor yourself," insolently replied one of the men; "we fulfil the orders we have received, and he who employs us laughs at every thing you can either say or do. Good-night"—saying which they withdrew.

The woman, more civil, endeavoured to console her prisoner, and promised to pay him every attention which she knew, she said, to be due to misfortune.

CHAP. XXIX.

A FORTNIGHT had now elapsed since Gideon had departed from Sumptuous Castle, to go to Haverfordwest, to the estate belonging his father, when Mr. Growell received a letter from Evan. The reader must remember that, after his duel with Major Hartwell's son, in which the latter lost his life, he disappeared, to avoid the laudable pursuits that it was natural for him to expect from the relatives of the deceased. Evan went to London, where his presence became an additional calamity to the unhappy Clara. Mr. and Mrs Growell suffered so much on being sepa-

rated from their only-beloved child, that they frequently appointed to meet him about ten miles from Sumptuous Castle, in order to enjoy the pleasure of conversing with him. Evan was the less unwilling to give them that satisfaction, as he every time carried back with him fresh means of supplying the extravagant expences which he daily incurred in London.

The letter, of which I have spoken at the beginning of this chapter, contained a demand of two thousand pounds. Evan did not suppose it necessary for him to give an account of the use he was to make of it; he testified his wish, and deemed that sufficient. Mr. Growell seemed to be excessively surprised at his son's imprudence, as he had received from his mother, not three weeks before, a present of five hundred pounds. He had made it hitherto a pleasure to refuse him nothing, but he was resolved

that he should not so far abuse his tenderness, as thus to squander away his property. His answer, very different from his former letters, was written with severity. Mrs. Growell shared in her husband's indignation, and approved his reply. She added, notwithstanding, some soothing words to the letter, which, according to her idea, would abate the uneasiness Evan would feel at having displeased his father. The event did not answer her expectation: Evan was enraged at Mr. Growell's refusal; he had been so far from imagining it possible, that he had already disposed of the two thousand pounds. He uttered the most violent execrations, and cursed all fathers in general, and more especially his own.

Evan's conduct, since he had resided in London, had been that of a man without principle or morality. Accus-

tomed to no other control than his own, he delivered himself up to the most dangerous inclinations. Dreadful excesses became the consequence. Knowing him to be rich, swarms of swindlers and prostitutes threw themselves in his way ; he became the dupe of them all, and his prodigalities created him, among them, an object of adoration. He drank deeply from the cup of flattery ; the money demanded of his father was destined for them ; let any one, therefore, judge of his disappointment, when, instead of the sum he so ardently desired, he received only a cold and unsatisfactory letter. In the first moment of his rage, he had the temerity to write to his father as he would have written to an attendant who had presumed to contradict him.

While these letters were passing and repassing, one arrived at Sumptuous

Castle, which created no small confusion in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Growell. The following is a copy :

ANONYMOUS LETTER.

“It is time that you should be undeceived ; Evan does not belong to you by any ties of blood. He was given to you in exchange for your eldest son, who exists, but is ignorant that you are his father. I might have preserved silence, and left things in the situation they have been in for five and twenty years, had not the unhappy Evan rendered himself every day less worthy of the bounties he enjoys, which are the inheritance of one of the most amiable of men. Evan is a monster, who has formed against you both the most horrible intentions. At this moment of my writing to you, he is lurking about the neighbourhood of Sumptuous Castle, and will probably this night present

himself before you, armed, and demand your delivering to him all the property contained in your iron-chest; and it will be happy if he respects the lives of those to whom he believes himself indebted for existence. I cannot make myself known to you without endangering my own safety; but my information, which cannot imply in me any personal interest, will put you at least in a situation to avoid the most horrible and the most pressing danger."

As soon as the letter had been read, Mr. and Mrs. Growell looked at each other in wild affright. "Evan not our son!"—cried Mrs. Growell; "no, I can never believe it; it must be a vile calumny; you know, my dear, no exchange could concern *us*!"

Mr. Growell, after a moment's hesitation, replied, "I am, like you, inclined to believe that this is false information; perhaps, too, some treachery

lurks at the bottom of it; and still, Evan's conduct has been latterly so revolting, that I know not what to think!"

At the same moment Evan's fulminating letter was brought in.—“Whether he is our son or not,” exclaimed Mr. Growell, “he is a scoundrel; read that,” said he to his wife, as he gave her the letter, the perusal of which shook Mrs. Growell's every nerve.

“We must to night be on our guard,” continued Mr. Growell; “if that monster, as the letter calls him, dares to come, his death shall be the certain consequence.”

“Oh, heaven, my love!—what, kill your own child!”—

“Perhaps, he is not such. But if he be, I shall have prevented the worst of crimes—the crime of parricide.”

“But you will commit one, yourself, little less atrocious.”

“What would you have me do?”

“Restore him, by kindness, to reason.”

“What! then you would have him cut my throat while he embraces me!—What a situation is mine!—I now begin to experience the torments of.....”

Mrs. Growell stared stedfastly upon him, but spoke not a word.

There was not, at this period, any person in the castle in whom Mr. Growell could repose confidence. He determined, therefore, himself to sit up with his wife; and took the precaution to shut with his own hands every door and window. He ordered the porter to refuse every one admission, upon whatever pretence; then, surrounding himself by a sort of artillery, he shut himself up with Mrs. Growell in the study.

Mrs. Growell, trembling, placed her chair near his, and all remained quiet

until one in the morning. A gentle noise was then heard in the room adjoining to that wherein sat Mr. and Mrs. Growell; a moment after the outside key was turned, and the door moved slowly upon its hinges. It was Evan who stood before them. He was followed by a man well known to Mr. Growell.

“What do you want here?”—asked Mr. Growell, in a thundering voice.

Evan, without being in the least disconcerted, replied that he came for the two thousand pounds.

“Thus will I give them to you, monster, vomited by hell!” replied Mr. Growell, taking a loaded pistol in his hand.

“It is precisely by those means,” said Evan, “that I intend to obtain them.”—At the same time he drew one from his pocket, and fired at Mr. Growell; the contents did not hit him, but lodged

under Mrs. Growell's right breast. She screamed loud enough to awaken all the servants, who ran in as Evan and his accomplice were endeavouring to escape; both were, however, prevented, and locked up in one of the lower apartments. Without waiting for his master's orders, one of the servants galloped to the adjacent town, to bring with him a surgeon as fast as possible.

Mr. Growell seemed to be in dreadful agitation, and appeared much less affected by the horrible situation in which he beheld his wife, than by his own inward disquietude. He paced from one chamber to another, raised his eyes to heaven, lifted his hands in silent, awful meditation, muttering oaths and horrible blasphemies.

Mrs. Growell had her daughter and her woman with her; they endeavoured to staunch the blood that flowed from her wound, and attempted to recal her

to life, which seemed to have completely forsaken her.

Three hours passed in this state of agony and suffering. The servants preserved a funereal silence; in short, the melancholy was general.

One of the men who had taken charge of the other two, came at six o'clock in the morning to inform Mr. Growell that his son wished to speak with him.—“The wretch, Evan,” replied Mr. Growell, “is not my son; he is an infamous scoundrel who has been substituted in the place of my own child. I will go, however, and know what he has to say to me. Have those two villains been searched?—Are you certain that they have no concealed arms about them, and that they are so well secured as to be approached without danger?”

The servant answered in the affirmative, and Mr. Growell proceeded to the

chamber in which they were confined. As soon as he entered the room, Evan requested him to send out the servants, and Mr. Growell made a sign to them to withdraw. He continued more than an hour with the two murderers. Coming out, he said to his servants, "They are more unfortunate than guilty, so I shall be satisfied with having only frightened them."

This speech very much amazed all his people, and they said, within themselves, "We ought not to suffer a crime of such enormity to go unpunished. We might as well be the accomplices. Son, or not son, of this castle, Mr. Evan is an assassin. His mother is wounded, perhaps killed by his hand; he must be delivered up to justice."

At that instant a loud noise was heard in the court-yard. It was a constable, accompanied by eight men, whom the officious servant had brought; they

were followed by a surgeon, who immediately went up to Mrs. Growell.

Before Mr. Growell became acquainted with the arrival of these men, Evan and his accomplice had been delivered up to them by his servants. In vain did he attempt to extenuate their crime; every one at the castle came forward as witness against them; and, after the regular process, the prisoners received notice that they were to be conducted to Hawfield, in order to remain in the prison until they could take their trial. As they went out, Evan said to his father, in a shrill accent, "Tremble!—If I perish, my execution will only precede yours.—Adieu, doubtless we shall meet again!"

END OF VOL. II.

CAN WE DOUBT IT?

OR, THE

GENUINE HISTORY

OF

TWO FAMILIES

OF

NORWICH.

By CHARLOTTE BOURNON-MALARME,

Member of the Academy of Arcades of Rome.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By MRS. VILLA-REAL GOOCH.

The punishment of the wicked, for being long delayed, is not the less severe.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1804.

CAN WE DOUBT IT?

&c.

CHAP. XXX.

I RETURN to the interesting and unfortunate Harriot, whom I left in a very critical situation. The excess of her terror had caused so great a revolution in her blood, that she had completely lost the use of reason. Her excessive paleness induced her father to believe that she was dead, and his despair had no bounds. He wished to revenge himself upon the inhuman wo-

man, who, a quiet spectator of that scene of horror, appeared to encourage her accomplices, and even to excite them not to show any mercy. Miss Milborn's state of insensibility preventing, however, at the moment, the accomplishment of their execrable designs, they withdrew, after having so far extended their cruelty as to announce to Lord Milborn, that they should very soon return to complete what they had hitherto only threatened; hoping, they said, to find Harriot restored to herself. "Hearts of flint!" exclaimed Lord Milborn, "I no longer fear you; my unhappy child has, I believe, already ceased to live, and soon shall I rejoin her; your malice can then no longer overtake us!"

Lord Milborn firmly believed that his daughter no longer existed; the icy coldness of death had benumbed both her mind and her body. Her father,

sitting close to her bed, surveyed her with wild and haggard looks. At one moment he thanked heaven for having released her from her sufferings, at another he accused heaven itself of cruelty. "How" said he, "could you so early destroy one of your own most beautiful works?" He next threw himself on his knees, and implored God to send him quickly to his child.—While he was employed in making this agonizing prayer, Harriot uttered a heavy sigh. Lord Milborn raised her in his arms. "My daughter," said he, "my Harriot! Oh! speak to your deeply-afflicted father!—Oh, God, I thank thee!—the object of my tenderness still breathes, and her honour is preserved; deign yet to watch over her days: her innocence and her virtue render her worthy of thy benefits. Harriot, my own Harriot, speak, and tell your father that you love him!"

“Father! oh, my father, where are you?”

“Here, my love, close by you,” and he dropped upon his knees. “How do you find yourself, my Harriot?”

“Weak, father, but a little recovering. But what a dreadful dream I have had!”—

“Alas, my love, it was a reality; but Providence has not forsaken us.”

Harriot threw herself into her father’s arms.—“Let us pray together, father,” said she; “the great Creator will not disdain our humble homage.”

The jailor came at his accustomed hour, but made no mention of the horrible transactions of the night.

Several days passed on without Lord Milborn or his daughter feeling the slightest change in their situation; but were constantly labouring under the most fearful apprehensions. The approach of every night excited in them

the most heart-rending terror. Harriot had resolved never at that time to undress herself. The courage with which her mother had once defended herself, under a similar circumstance, had given her the idea of having always ready the same means of escaping infamy: she had constantly, therefore, a knife concealed in her bosom, of which her father was ignorant; and whenever sleep, contrary to her inclination, overcame her, she still held in her hand the weapon which she was to make use of as a last resource. Lord Milborn conceived the idea of placing his bed across the door, so that no one could enter without his hearing; and that precaution would give him time likewise to prepare himself for the most vigorous defence. Such, during a month, was the miserable existence both of father and daughter.

Night was beginning to fall, and the

hear of the jailor's last visit drew near, when the prisoners heard the sound of horses and of carriages; and soon after perceived, coming in, an aged man, followed by a woman and the jailor. Lord Milborn immediately recognized the former to be the old man who had, with respect to him, played a double part; it was he, in fact, who had been the apparent mediator between the person who had forged his name to the bond of six thousand guineas, out of which Lord Milborn had been cheated some years before; and the same man who had sent for him on the night the murder was committed; the same, likewise, who had appeared at the trial to prove him guilty. His appearance, as may be supposed, caused Lord Milborn to shudder with horror.—“What do you want with me, now?” said his lordship, as he entered his room. “You are a monster far more terrible than the most

savage beasts of the wood. What fresh calamity brings you here? Are you come to revel in the blood of your victims?"

"I am come," replied he, "to repair, if possible, the little injury that I may have done you; come, before five hours have expired, you shall be released from the power of your enemies."

"Alas," replied Lord Milborn, "I know of none but yourself, and I am far from guessing what is your motive."

"You will very shortly, my lord, know every thing, and you will shudder with horror."

"Young lady," said the woman, as she approached Miss Milborn, "take hold of my arm:" but Harriot, instead of acceding to her proposal, ran to take refuge in her father's arms.

"Let us lose no time," said the old man, "let us be gone."

Perceiving that Lord Milborn and his daughter hesitated, he replied, "What can you fear worse than that which awaits you here?—Those who detain you have sufficiently testified that they are your most implacable enemies. I do not promise to restore you immediately to liberty; but I swear to you that, at the place where I mean to conduct you, no person will attempt the life of the one or the honour of the other. Profit of the moment in which I have it in my power to lead you from this terrific abode; if you remain in it this night, nay, perhaps in one hour, the most horrible measures will be fulfilled."

"If, as I fear," replied Lord Milborn, "you mean to deceive us, death will soon deliver us from your infernal machinations. Be assured that we both possess the means of obtaining it speedily and effectually. Come, my Harriot,

we can never be worse than we are at present."

They all five descended with precipitation; the jailor drove, as postillion, a carriage drawn by three horses, into which went Lord Milborn, his daughter, the old man, and the woman.

Not a word was spoken during the journey. About ten at night, the horses stopped. The old man and the woman got out of the coach, and, while the first gave his hand to assist the prisoners, the other took a key from her pocket, and opened the door of a small house, situated in the open country.

"Frank," said the old man, addressing the jailor, "you know what you are to do with the horses and carriage; endeavour to be back before midnight, for you must carry the letter in question."

"I know, I know," replied he, and,

whipping the horses, speedily disappeared.

They conducted Lord Milborn and his daughter into a neat room; and, after having presented them with refreshments, which they both declined, the old man said to the woman, "Take a candle, Nancy, and light my lord and Miss Harriot."

"Where are we to go?" said Harriot, in visible alarm.

"It would be as dangerous for you as for us," he replied, "did we not conceal you from every eye. You are at present ignorant of what is passing, and it is not the moment to inform you. I acknowledge myself a guilty man; I have aggravated your sufferings, my lord; but I was only an agent, and if I had refused, he, who is the contriver, would have replaced me by others. As I do not, however, wish to appear better than I am, I will own to you that it

is not to any motive of returning honour that you are indebted to my good intentions towards you. When I aimed at your destruction, it was to serve my own interest; that same interest leads me at present to abandon those whom I have served: you owe me, therefore, nothing for what I have already, nor even for what I may still further do in the end."

This strange discourse being ended, the woman brought a lantern. Harriot laid hold of her father's arm, and they followed their guide. The old man accompanied them as far as the garden-gate, and then returned to the house.

They went through a long alley which was turfed and surrounded by walls. When nearly arrived at the end, they perceived what appeared to be the ruins of several cottages. The woman raised a bolt, and opened an

old door. She placed within it the father and daughter, and then closed it. They found themselves in a sort of coach-house, or green-house. The conductress pulled about some bundles of straw, which seemed to have been negligently left there in a corner. They discovered a shutter, which she opened, and which showed a stair-case. They descended thirty steps, and perceived another door, which the woman likewise opened. She pushed Lord Milborn and Harriot into a subterraneous chamber, which was boarded, closed the door, and cried out, "Farewell, till to-morrow."

The night was very dark.—"The wretch!" exclaimed Lord Milborn; "and he calls this new prison a relaxation of our sufferings!"

"It will, perhaps, prove so," replied Harriot, "if we are no longer exposed

to the nocturnal visits of that atrocious woman who wishes us so much harm."

"Whoever you be," cried a voice that issued from another part of the same room, "I defy your miseries to exceed mine!"

The first emotion of the two new comers was that of fear; but pity almost instantly succeeded it. — Great God!" replied Lord Milborn, "the monsters then who persecute us unite their victims, in order that they may perish all together. Unfortunate companion of our pains and of our griefs, can you, will you make yourself known to the man who exists but in despair?"

"Wherefore," cried he, "should I conceal myself from *you*, when my only wish is to inform the whole world of the horrors of my captivity? — My name is Grimsby."

"Grimsby!" replied Lord Milborn, "Captain Grimsby!" and he instantly

fell upon his knees. "Almighty God!" cried he, "what a wonderful! what a blessed meeting! And I, I am Milborn, accused of having murdered you!"

"Lord Milborn! is it you? and who could possibly conceive the idea of your having taken away my life?"

"Alas!" replied Lord Milborn, "every proof was against me;" and he was beginning to relate his mournful history, when Captain Grimsby said, "Pardon, my lord, if I interrupt you, but you are both standing up; the situation of this dismal place is not known to you; permit me to conduct you and the lady with you to some seats." He took Lord Milborn's hand, and presented him with two chairs. They both sat down.

"Harriot," said Lord Milborn, "we must now be thankful to Providence;

this unexpected blessing was beyond my hopes."

"What!" replied Captain Grimsby, "is it then Miss Harriot who shares your captivity? Oh! let me beg of you to relate all these mournful and singular events."

Lord Milborn then entered into every detail of what had passed since Captain Grimsby had disappeared from Milborn-Hall. Grimsby listened in horror to the many wicked means that had been employed in order to effect the ruin of a truly good man.—As soon as he had ended his recital, Grimsby began his own, which both Lord Milborn and Harriot were equally impatient to hear.

"As soon, my lord, as you had quitted the temporary room, to inquire who waited for you, Evan Growell laid hold of my arm, and said, 'Grimsby, I am going to convince you how much

women impose upon the public, under the mask of virtue. Come and witness an amorous rendezvous between two people whom you are very far from suspecting of having any attachment for each other.'—I own that Mr. Growell's words excited in me so much curiosity, that I hastened to follow him. He led me into the labyrinth. As soon as we were arrived at the rotunda, in the centre, the treacherous Evan stabbed me in the breast in two places with a dagger. I fell, and lost my senses. When I recovered them, I found myself here, lying upon a bed. A woman, the same who conducted you to this place, was endeavouring to dress my two wounds. I must have lost a great deal of blood, for I was so weak that I could not even speak to her. She nursed me with much care, and, at length, succeeded in curing me. As soon as I recovered, I begged that I might be per-

mitted to quit this desolate place ; but she told me that I must not hope to recover my liberty in less than five or six years. In vain did I alternately implore and threaten her. As it appeared to her that I was determined upon using violence to get out of my horrible prison, she came, accompanied by two men, one of them very old. They were both armed with pistols, and told me that they should watch night and day at the door of my dungeon, and that all my efforts to escape would lead only to my receiving no other provision than bread and water ; and that they should deprive me of all the little indulgences which I was then permitted to enjoy. This menace determined me to wait till a more favourable opportunity offered, that I might not expose myself to still more wretchedness."

"You are now convinced, I hope, papa," said Harriot, as soon as Mr.

Grimsby had ceased speaking, "that it is that monster Evan who has created all our miseries!"

"You forget, my dear, that there are furies, with the figures of women, who have sworn before us, our destruction."

"Well!—Evan was in league with them; it was he who was in the wood; it was he who again, the other night, entered our chamber."

"Miss Harriot," replied Grimsby, "may well suspect and accuse him of every crime; there is not one which he is not capable of committing."

"Alas," said Lord Milborn, sighing, "how much I pity my friend, Growell, in having such a son!"

The conversation continued the greatest part of the night.—Harriot, overwhelmed by fatigue, dropped asleep upon her chair. Grimsby proposed to her father to carry, and lay her on her bed, which was a pretty good one.

Lord Milborn took his daughter in his arms, and, assisted by Grimsby, gently placed her on the bed. They then deliberated on the possibility of breaking their chains. Day-light appearing through an aperture in the window, gave Lord Milborn an opportunity of recognizing the features of his wife's deliverer. He appeared to him extremely altered, but he still preserved that air of candour and sincerity which had distinguished him at the moment of their first acquaintance.

The purveyor brought early in the morning every necessary material for another bed.—“The two gentlemen,” said she, “must sleep together, and Miss Harriot must take possession of the bed that Captain Grimsby formerly occupied.”

She had brought with her likewise some provisions. The quality and the quantity left nothing to be wished for.

At night, she did not appear, but the

two men brought in the supper. Lord Milborn implored them to put an end to their sufferings, by restoring them to their respective families and situations. The old man replied, with an oath, — “Do you not suppose that I myself wish to see the end of all this trouble and confusion? Within the last four years neither myself, nor any of those belonging to me, have enjoyed repose or satisfaction. By turns jailor, informer, and spy, what am I? That is, however, the life which I lead.”

“In the number of characters that you have played within these four years,” said Grimsby, “have you sustained the part of an executioner?”

“Never!” replied the old man.” Oh! no! I have no murder to reproach myself with; and I should, perhaps, have spent my whole life as an honest man, had it not been for my daughter. She was guilty of the first fault, and every succeeding one appears less; it is too true, that within the last four years I

have committed nothing but crimes, in order to obey those upon whom I depend."

"Within the last four years?" replied Lord Milborn, "that date exactly forms the commencement of my calamities."

"No wonder," said he, "for my bad actions had no objects but you and yours."

"I must be then terribly hated by your employers," said Lord Milborn.

"They have no other wish in the world," he replied, "than that of ruining you, and no other pleasures but those which they derive from your sufferings."

"Great God!" replied Lord Milborn, "of what have I been guilty towards them?"

"I cannot, nor I will not, add another word," said the old man; "but either I am in the wrong, or every

thing will be very shortly found out. I shall sink, no doubt, as well as the rest; but I have reserved the means, not to save myself, that is impossible, but to sacrifice the most guilty."

He withdrew, leaving the prisoners in a state of amazement, tintured with hope. The character of their guard sufficiently evinced that he would not remain for ever incorruptible.

CHAP. XXXI.

I RETURN to Lady Milborn, whom I left at the end of the twenty-fifth chapter. It was at the moment when Ancelina had sent to her sister-in-law, Clara, the five hundred pounds, by command of her mother.

Deprived of every consolation, unable even to have confidence in a happier change of circumstances, what a dreadful situation was that of Lady Milborn and her daughter!—Their only society was that of Mr. and Mrs. Grewell, who, ever faithful to their friends, came frequently to partake of their well-founded uneasiness. Pervious

House was the settled residence of grief. Diana and Emery, not chusing to leave their unhappy lady, continued to wait upon her with the most fervent zeal and attachment. A conduct as captivating as uncommon, had rendered those two excellent creatures dear to the heart of Lady Milborn, and she no longer considered them as servants, but as sincere and faithful friends.

At the time of Clara's returning the four hundred and fifty pounds, Lady Milborn laboured under an additional anguish that pierced her very soul. Godwin was the only one of her children whom she had nursed; she did not know that she was more attached to him than to the rest, but when she became informed of his unfortunate end, she suffered such violent affliction as no longer to doubt that her tenderness for him had been excessive. As she could not refrain from accusing Mr. and Mrs. Growell

of barbarity, she abstained for some days from receiving them. Her friends, accustomed to see her every time they went to Pervious House, were surprised and mortified at the pains she took to avoid them. They complained of it to Ancelina, who made excuses that were not received. Mrs. Growell expressed so much sorrow at this apparent coldness in her friend, that Lady Milborn overcame every repugnance, and devoted herself still more warmly to the service of friendship.

The terrible event which had taken place at Sumptuous Castle being known at Pervious House, Lady Milborn sent for post-horses, having sold all her own, and as soon as they arrived, she went, accompanied by her daughter, to her friend's house. Mrs. Growell was very ill; her wound was in a very dangerous place; and, were she even to recover, it would be necessary to per-

form the dreadful operation of taking off her breast; such was the decision of the surgeon.

The servants being accustomed to see Lady Milborn come at all hours, and in all the apartments, did not make any difficulty when they saw her proceeding towards Mrs. Growell's room: that lady screamed out when she saw her.

"Does my presence, my dear friend, afflict you?" said Lady Milborn. "I am come to offer that which I have so frequently received from you, care and consolation."

"Oh, no! no!"—replied Mrs. Growell, "it is not seeing *you* that gives me uneasiness, it is the telling you that I am, if possible, still more wretched than yourself. You have been informed, without doubt," she continued, "that Evan has made an attack upon my life!"—

Lady Milborn bowed assent.

“Do you know, likewise, that this monster is not my son?”—

“I never heard so; but how is that possible?”—

“An anonymous letter has announced it.”

“If that is your only authority,” replied Lady Milborn, “you have a right to doubt its veracity; yet, my friend, if it is fact, you ought to rejoice at it, particularly after what passed last night; but, tell me, how do you find yourself?”

“Very ill, indeed,” said Mrs. Growell; “I suffer severely both in body and mind.”

“The latter is more difficult to be cured than the former,” replied Lady Milborn; “its physician is reason; and I know, from fatal experience, that it is not always easy to follow her counsels.”

"Have you seen Mr. Growell to-day, Lady Milborn?"

"No, my first impatience was to behold *you*."

"Do you know that he seems to think very little about me."

"My dear friend," replied Lady Milborn, "you must forgive him; he is surely deeply affected, and fears to augment your sufferings by the sight of his own."

"How kindly you excuse him; but you are a model of indulgence. Your many excellent qualities ought to insure you friends every where."

"My misfortunes," said Lady Milborn, "drive them from me."

Mrs. Growell sighed, and made no reply.

At that moment Mr. Growell came in; he ran to Lady Milborn, and kissed her hand.—"You see," said he, "that

it is now *our* turn to become the victims of destiny."

"Your courage and your philosophy," replied Lady Milborn, "will enable you to triumph over them."

"Evan," continued Mr. Growell, "is not our son!"

"So my friend has just told me," replied Lady Milborn.

"He was exchanged," said Mr. Growell, "for our eldest son."

"What, by his nurse, do you suppose?"

"No doubt of it."

"I hope," said Lady Milborn, "that you will use every exertion to come to the bottom of this iniquitous mystery."

"I was busied about it," replied Mr. Growell, "when your ladyship's arrival was announced to me."

Towards night, Mrs. Growell becoming visibly worse, Lady Milborn resolved not to leave her, but to stay

at Sumptuous Castle, and to send Ancelina back to Pervious House. Aurea asked leave to accompany her, which was granted, and the two young people went in the post-chaise which had brought Lady Milborn. Mr. Growell said, that he would, on the following day, lend his carriage to his friend to return home, and that Aurea must come back in it.

No change for the better having then taken place in Mrs. Growell, Lady Milborn said that it was her determination to stay with, and attend her as a nurse; she passed the days sitting by her bed-side, and the nights in a tent-bed that was brought into the room. An attachment, manifested with so much sincerity, excited all Mrs. Growell's sensibility, and she burst into tears. "You are," said she, "an angel; oh, why do not all hearts resemble yours?"

“Do you forget, then, my dear friend,” replied Lady Milborn, “that for the last four years you have passed the greatest part of your time in giving me such strong proofs of your regard, that I can never, no never, be able to evince to you my gratitude!”

Lady Milborn had now passed a week at Sumptuous Castle, and her friend continued to suffer the most dreadful torments. The surgeon seemed surprised, that a wound, which was certainly very deep, but dangerous only from its situation, should not, however, allow of any repose to his patient. He was one day just gone, with the intention of passing two or three hours elsewhere, Mr. Growell was sitting with Lady Milborn by his wife's bed-side, when the door opened, and three persons hastily entered, uttering exclamations of joy. Lady Milborn in a moment found herself clasped in the arms

of her husband, and saw her beloved Harriot at her feet. So much extasy took from her the power of expressing it, she could only stretch out her arms to the two objects so dear to her, whom she had so little expected to behold. Mr. Growell, too, seemed to be surprised, but he preserved calmness enough to express to his friend the pleasure he derived from seeing him again. Mrs. Growell, whose weakness was excessive, could only utter a feeble exclamation.

“You are then at last restored to me,” said Lady Milborn to her husband, “oh, my beloved Milborn, what excess of felicity!—and you, my Harriot, whom I have so often and so tenderly deplored, you are now restored to the bosom of your truly-affectionate mother. Rise, my child, rise; it is in my heart, and not at my feet, that your place is chosen.”

“My dearest Lucretia,” said Lord Milborn, “I bring with me my justification; he is here, whom I stand accused of having murdered!”

“Mr. Grimsby!” at once exclaimed Lady Milborn and Mrs. Growell.

“Himself!” replied Grimsby, advancing. The curtains of the windows being drawn, and the chamber consequently dark, had prevented his being hitherto seen. The sudden and unexpected appearance too of Lord Milborn had engrossed the general attention.

“What abundance of happiness!” said Mr. Growell, as he alternately embraced his friend and Captain Grimsby. “Heaven, I perceive, never forsakes innocence: it is for the guilty alone to tremble; they cannot escape either divine or human justice!”

“What you say, Mr. Growell,” replied Grimsby, “is a well-established truth.”

Lady Milborn, astonished at her friend's silence, went up to her in order to receive her congratulations; but what horror seized her, on observing that the sheets were dyed with blood! She immediately examined, and found that Mrs. Growell's wound had again opened, and that her blood flowed in torrents. Lady Milborn screamed aloud, and every one hastened to stop an effusion which appeared likely to be followed by life itself. After much difficulty, they at length succeeded in replacing the bandages. Mrs. Growell had, however, fainted away; with the assistance of proper cordials, she slowly recovered; but reason seemed to have wholly deserted her. Her words were wandering and indefinable; they were expressed at intervals, and never varied from "Tortures! death! scaffolds! prison!"—Her terrified husband left the room,

accompanied by every one who witnessed this scene of confusion and horror.

As soon as they had reached another chamber, Mr. Growell entreated from his friend a circumstantial detail of every thing that had happened to him since he left the prison at Hawfield. Lord Milborn, as much to satisfy his impatience as that of his lady's, whose eagerness he read in her eyes, hastened to give them the recital of his sufferings. I shall not repeat to the reader, the events which we have followed step by step; but I will continue, in Lord Milborn's words, the reasons which urged him to escape, with his daughter and Captain Grimsby, out of the subterraneous chamber wherein they were confined, and the means which they employed to facilitate their deliverance.

"After," said he, "the half sentences pronounced by the old man, I

plainly perceived that he was the chief agent employed by my enemies; it appeared to me, likewise, that he experienced, if not remorse, which villains seldom feel but at the moment of their dissolution, at least impatience and restraint, and that he was really tired of acting the part of a guilty man. As soon as he had left us, I communicated my observations to Mr. Grimsby and my daughter; they judged as I did, and we resolved, at his next visit, to draw from him further explanations. An opportunity presented itself on the following day, when he came alone with our provisions. He was very conversable, and it was not difficult for us to renew the evening's conference. As we multiplied our questions with an air of the most seeming indifference, we succeeded in lulling his prudence to sleep. He inveighed against Providence, which destroyed the best com-

bined plans. 'For instance,' said he, 'has it not played us the most unlucky trick in stopping the grand wheel of our industrious machine?—You understand me,' he continued, and smiled as he spoke; 'I am speaking allegorically.' 'Oh, yes,' replied Mr. Grimsby, as if inspired, 'I understand you. Evan has been fool enough to suffer himself to be taken.' The old man seemed frightened. 'Who told you so?' said he; and, without waiting our reply, he thus continued: 'It was my daughter, I suppose!' We nodded to him affirmatively. 'Poor woman!' said he; 'her grief is so excessive, that I believe it will turn her brain; but she is excusable, her fondness for her son being so great; I foresaw all that would happen; and although Evan is my grandchild, yet I could never love him; I acknowledge, that as he believed himself to be the son of a man loaded with

wealth, he could not feel any respect for a servant of his father's; but my daughter, who is his mother, was also his nurse; he owed her at least some attachment on that account.'—At that moment the other man came in. 'Come then, father,' said he impatiently, and the old man left us with precipitation. At night his son came alone. We expressed our wish to see his father. 'He is from home,' he replied, 'and will not return before to-morrow.' We knew that the woman was not in the house, and the opportunity was favourable: Grimsby and I exchanged looks; our eyes served as interpreters, and, by a spontaneous emotion, we each fell upon our jailor. Harriot tore the sheets, which served us to bind him. As soon as he was no longer able to resist, we took from him the keys of the house. We had nothing to apprehend from his calling for help;

it was his interest to be silent; in short, we quitted our dungeon and the house without any obstacle whatever. Instead of going directly to Milborn-Hall, I thought it better to come here, in order that my dear Lucretia might be first apprized by friendship of our arrival. I feared that my unexpected presence might be attended with dangerous consequences by her too great agitation. Chance has rendered my precaution needless, and happily Lady Milborn's joy has been controlled by reason."

It was now Captain Grimsby's turn to relate to Mr. Growell by what miracle he had made his re-appearance, to restore honour to his friend and his family. He repeated every thing he had said to Lord Milborn, at the moment of their meeting in the subterraneous chamber. When he had done speaking, Mr. Growell exhausted his indignation by the most dreadful imprecations

against the infernal Evan, and in reproaching himself for having committed a crime by so blind an attachment whilst he believed him to be his son.

As the clothing of Harriot and of her father resembled disguises, (the reader will remember that, upon their entering the prison, they were forced to put on peasants' habits,) Mrs. Growell's woman received orders to supply Miss Milborn with a gown, and every other necessary. Lord Milborn retired to his friend's dressing-room, where he became likewise completely equipped.

Mr. Growell went out of the room, and Lady Milborn remained alone with Mr. Grimsby. "How much" said she, "I pity our excellent friends for having so long cherished a venomous reptile in their breast!—What a monster, Captain Grimsby, is that Evan!"

"He cannot be alone the inventor of

all these crimes, Lady Milborn," replied Grimsby; "I will assist your lord to raise the thick veil which has so long concealed the guilty. Already the obscurity begins to disappear: I trust, we shall soon see distinctly enough to penetrate through more than suspicions."

"God grant," replied Lady Milborn, "that tranquillity and happiness may once more reign among us all!"

All being re-united, Lady Milborn retired to her friend. The surgeon was returned. He became the more shocked by Mrs. Growell's misfortune, on perceiving, that her wound was in a very bad state. She had recovered the use of her reason, but her strength was entirely exhausted; and it was scarcely possible to comprehend what she articulated with extreme difficulty. The sight of Lady Milborn appeared to agi

tate her extremely: the surgeon, who perceived it, prevailed upon her ladyship to withdraw for a few minutes, alledging that Mrs. Growell wanted rest, and that he believed her to be disposed to go to sleep. Lady Milborn repaired to the saloon, which they soon quitted to obey the summons to dinner.

As soon as it was over, Lord Milborn requested his friend to lend him a carriage, that he might go with his family and Mr. Grimsby to Pervious House. His wife had, he said, informed him that Milborn-Hall had been confiscated, and that she had in consequence hired a small house.

“I foresaw your demand,” replied Mr. Growell, “but I have been just informed that my coach is gone to be mended, and cannot be ready before to-morrow morning; my son Gideon

has taken the post-chaise, so that at present, I can offer you nothing more than horses."

"Those," answered Lord Milborn, "would do for Grimsby and myself, but my wife and Harriot are both, as you know, afraid of riding."

"This delay," replied Lady Milborn, "disappoints me less, as I hope to leave my friend better to-morrow than she is to-day."

"As for myself," said Lord Milborn, "I confess I am disappointed, because I wished to pass this night with my own family, and to go early to-morrow, in order to surrender myself to the prison at Hawfield, for one thing is wanting to my justification, and that is, to know who was the murderer of the turn-key."

"What, my friend!" cried Mr. Growell, "are you going to deliver yourself up again a prisoner?"

“ He *ought* to do so,” said Grimsby, with great precipitation, “and my intention is to accompany him, and never to leave him, until he is reinstated in every right belonging to him as a man and a citizen.”

“ How much do I applaud you !” replied Mr. Growell, “and how proud I shall ever feel myself in future, to style you my friend !—Yet suffer me to make one observation ; the law, my lord, authorizes bail ; permit me to become yours on this occasion. You will then be exempt from the horror of being again confined in those dreadful places, wherein you have passed such disgraceful and cruel moments.”

“ I thank, you,” replied Lord Milborn, “ I thank you most cordially for your generous offer ; but I cannot, I will further say, I *ought* not to accept it ; the public must, and *shall* know that I come freely forward to surrender

myself to every thing that is honourable and every thing that is just."

It was agreed that the Milborn party should depart at six the next morning; the remainder of the day was passed in remarks upon the numerous events that had taken place within the last four years. Mr. Growell repeatedly said, that neither money nor trouble ought to be considered, while there remained a hope of discovering the perpetrators of such enormous offences.—
"Make use of my purse, my dear lord," said he to his friend; "the whole of my property can never be better employed than in serving persecuted innocence and virtue."

Harriot joined but little in the conversation; she was longing for the moment to embrace her sister; and she was also deploring Alfred's departure, of which her mother had informed her,

as well as their uncertainty, respecting his fate.

Mr. Grimsby became pensive and silent; and when Mr. Growell remarked it, he replied that the wounds he had received had reduced him to so weak a state, that he could not without difficulty support the most trifling fatigue. That was an additional reason for their repairing at an early hour to rest. Lady Milborn went again into Mrs. Growell's room; but, on being informed that she slept, quitted the apartment, and went to look for her daughter, with whom she passed the night.

On the following morning, at six o'clock, the noise made by the carriage on approaching the door, hastened the Milborn family. Mr. Grimsby was already in the library with Mr. Growell, and as soon as breakfast was over, they departed together.

The shortest way to Pervious House was across a heath, totally barren. When they had arrived nearly half-way, they perceived a solitary hut, situated in a lane, and about a hundred paces from the road, from whence issued four men, dressed as hunters, and carrying guns.

“Those,” said Harriot, who first perceived them, “those are sportmen who have risen early.”

Grimsby looked at them, and replied in a loud and impressive voice, “Those are no sportsmen;—my lord, we are betrayed. Among those four persons, I can discover the old man and his son.”

“Merciful heaven!” exclaimed Harriot, “Evan is there, I can plainly see him.”

“And we are unarmed!” replied Lord Milborn.

“Almighty God!” said Lady Mil-

born, as she raised her hands to heaven, "protect my husband and my child!"

During this short discourse, the men had imperceptibly approached. The postillions, suspecting nothing, went on at their usual pace. Grimsby let down one of the fore-glasses, and ordered them to gallop their horses; which they did immediately. A pistol-shot, but too well aimed at their leader, reached him, and he fell, which occasioned the horses to take fright, and they set off at full speed. In vain did the pretended sportsmen continue firing, in hopes of breaking their legs; they were soon out of their reach; the other postillion used every endeavour to stop the mettlesome beasts; he was obliged, in order to save his life, to throw himself off, and as far from the carriage as he could. He was fortunate enough to succeed; his fall having given him only a few slight bruises.

As soon as he got up, he cast a mournful look at the carriage, which still continued flying over hedges and ditches; but soon he lost sight of it entirely. As he walked on, he perceived the four villains, who re-entered the cabin from whence they first came out. They did not remark him, and he sorrowfully bent his way towards Sumptuous Castle, when he saw three men coming towards him. On drawing nearer, and perceiving they were armed, he joined them, and asked whether they would have the courage to assist him in taking four thieves, who, after having shot his fellow servant, had taken refuge in the place which he pointed out to them. "We were" said he, "conducting Lord and Lady Milborn to Pervious House, when they attacked us."

"Lord and Lady Milborn!" at once

exclaimed the three men, "where are they?"

"It will be impossible for us," replied the postillion, "to come up with them; but let us at least endeavour to revenge them, by exterminating those wretches, among whom, or I am indeed much mistaken, I recognised the infamous Evan, who was in prison at Hawfield, eight or ten days ago."

"My friend," replied one of the strangers, "there are two loaded pistols; join your efforts to ours, and I think we may be assured of the victory."

Thus disposed, they went into the lane leading to the hut, at which they arrived in a few minutes.

CHAP. XXXII.

WHEN Mrs. Milborn and Miss Wilson left London, the latter took a letter of recommendation from one of her friends for a farmer at Glimmering, a hamlet situated two miles from Godalmin, in Surrey. They were very kindly welcomed; the honest Cecil being the son of a clergyman, had received an education superior to that usually given to villagers. His conversation was habitually cheerful, and he possessed a heart replete with sensibility.—His wife was open, good, and generous. United more than twenty years, this estimable couple had never experienced any other

uncasiness, than that of having no children.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil very soon attached themselves to the two ladies, and more particularly to Clara. Miss Wilson remarked the preference given to her friend, and so far from being jealous of it, she felt inwardly rejoiced.

After a residence at Glimmering Farm of six weeks or two months, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil were invited to a little holiday, to be given by the farmer's eldest brother, the vicar of a small town not far from Glimmering. It was to be in compliment to one of his daughters, who was going to be married. Mrs. Cecil would not consent to go, she said, unless the two amiable strangers were of the party. The vicar came himself to invite them, and they could not refuse the compliment, of which they were fully sensible.

The company assembled was large

and brilliant, for the country. A number of the neighbouring gentlemen did not disdain to attend, and their wives, according to custom, decorated themselves with their most elegant apparel. When Clara came into the room, accompanied by her friend and the Cecils, all eyes were fixed upon her. Her deep mourning, contrasted with the whiteness and bloom of her skin, rendered her peculiarly charming; and, with the exception of a little jealousy that marked the curious regards of some of the women, there was but one opinion of the lovely widow. Her modest reserve, her extreme gracefulness, and, more than all, the interesting languor, which announced a mind under the influence of sorrow, every thing excited admiration, and the wish of becoming acquainted with the newly-arrived lady.

Clara and Miss Wilson went into the room in which there was the least com-

pany. They were followed by several persons, and, among others, by a gentleman, who, ever since Clara's entrance, had riveted his eyes upon her. Clara had observed it, and it was one of the reasons that had induced her to retire into another room. Astonished and vexed, at being thus remarked, by looks which were extremely unpleasant to her, she proposed to Miss Wilson to go into the garden, and mentioned her motive for wishing to leave the apartments. Miss Wilson looked at the gentleman, and perceived that he was gazing very earnestly on Mrs. Milborn, but his looks were so decent, and even so timid, that she upbraided her friend for being offended by them.—“I can distinguish,” added Miss Wilson, “in the looks of that young man, less of curiosity than of disquietude; I think he is endeavouring to recal your features to his recollection.”

“I think, too,” replied Clara, “that his face is not entirely unknown to me. Surely I have met with him some where.”

They were holding this conversation as they were going towards the garden. The gentleman, who believed they were going away, assumed courage, joined them, and took the liberty, he said, of asking whether they would be unkind enough to deprive the company so soon of the pleasure of seeing them.

“We are not going away yet,” replied Miss Wilson, “we are only going to take a turn in the garden.”

“May I be permitted, without standing accused of impertinence, to accompany you, ladies?”

A curtsy was the only reply, which he attributed to their consent. Notwithstanding all Clara’s endeavours to avoid him, she could not help attending to everything he said; he had so much grace

and facility of expression, that it would have been almost impossible to have listened to him without interest. While they were walking and conversing, Clara quite forgot that she had proposed to her friend to come into the garden, for the sole purpose of avoiding a man, who, to all appearance, attended only to herself. The stranger, profiting by their kindness in accepting of his company, hazarded a few questions, and inquired of Clara whether she had never been in the county of ——? She coloured, and replied that her father lived there. He softly pronounced the name of Sumptuous Castle. Clara became doubly confused, while she said that it was the castle in which her family resided.

“It is then,” said the young man, “Miss Clara Growell to whom I have the honour of paying my respects.”

“My friend,” replied Miss Wilson,

seeing Clara's confusion, "is now Mrs. Milborn."

The stranger turned pale.

"But," continued Miss Wilson, "she had the misfortune of losing Mr. Milborn some months since."

Here tears darted into Clara's eyes; and, although the stranger appeared to sympathize in her grief, an indifferent observer might easily have perceived the effect that it had upon him.

Miss Wilson, affected by the sorrows of her friend, endeavoured to change the conversation; but her efforts were useless; the stranger's inquiries had brought back to Clara the melancholy reflection of those days when distress had never interrupted her tranquillity, and retraced in her mind all the mournful transactions that had followed them; the consequences, she felt assured, of having disobeyed her father's orders. Miss Wilson's reply had brought before

her eyes the dreadful death of him so much beloved, and who was so little worthy of it. These corroding and bitter reflections irritated so deeply her wounded mind, that she sobbed aloud. Her friend took her by the arm, and, assisted by the stranger, conducted her to a bench in the shade. As soon as she was seated, the young man, with one knee upon the ground, and in the attitude of a criminal who awaits sentence of death, conjured the interesting widow to pardon the fault of which he had been guilty in opening, by his indiscretion, those wounds, which seemed to be breaking her heart.—“ Oh, you,” said he, “ who have been for nearly four years the object of my constant adoration ! you whom I shall never cease to love but with the loss of life, deign to bestow a look of pity upon a man whom you have, unknowingly, made for ever miserable; recollect in him, now prostrate

at your feet, the unfortunate George Modbury, who never throughout life experienced but one gleam of happiness, which was when he was flattered that he might obtain your hand. Oh, Madam, why did I not die when I became rejected by you?—I will not attempt to describe to you the excess of my despair, upon hearing that you were forever lost to me; it would be abusing the kindness you show in listening to me; but, tell me, I conjure you, tell me you forgive me.”

Clara had listened to young Modbury without interrupting him. When he had ceased speaking, she uncovered her face, which had been hitherto buried in her handkerchief. The emotion of the young man, his supplicating posture, and, added to that, his fine person, inspired something more than pity in the heart of the young widow, and she felt herself interested in endeavour-

ing to console him.—“ Rise” said she, “ Mr. Modbury, I entreat you; I must feel shocked and somewhat offended by your hasty, and at this time improper declaration; but I remember that you were chosen by my parents, and have therefore a claim to my indulgence. But in order that you may know fully how to appreciate it, look for a moment on my sable dress. It will tell you that it is more than improper to dare to speak of love to her who every day sheds tears over the most dreadful loss that a woman can sustain.”

“ I feel, Madam,” replied he, “ my error, and your kindness renders my remorse still more poignant; but is there then no pardon for a man whom despair misguides?—I have suffered so much on your account, that my fault surely deserves compassion.”

Clara, without making any reply, took Miss Wilson’s arm, and proceeded

slowly towards the house. Modbury mournfully followed them. Arrived at the foot of the stairs, he presumed not to offer her his hand. Clara perceiving his embarrassment, held out hers to him, still leaning on Miss Wilson.—“I know Mr. Cecil, the farmer,” said he, “and have frequently called on him. Should I now fly his house, because an angel inhabits it?”

“I have no right,” replied Clara, “to prevent Mr. Cecil’s acquaintance from visiting him ; and the esteem with which he has inspired me, should be extended towards his friends.”

Modbury respectfully kissed her hand, which she withdrew precipitately.

“Mr. Modbury,” said she, “are you among the number of those who presume upon too much indulgence?”

“Oh no, no Madam; never shall you reproach me with that.”

“I believe, and I hope it, Mr. Modbury.”

When they came in, Mrs. Cecil asked Clara, whether she could have the courage to return to Glimmering on foot?

“Not only the courage,” she replied, “but the strength.”

“Well, then, we will, if you please, go directly.”

“I am quite ready.”

They took leave of the vicar and his family, and began their walk. Mr. Cecil staid behind, to speak on business with a husbandman, but soon joined the ladies. They were astonished on seeing him accompanied by Mr. Modbury.—“Here,” said he, addressing them, “is Mr. Modbury, whom I was obliged to force along with me. Mrs. Milborn and Miss Wilson, I introduce him to you, as a young man who deserves to be distinguished from the fops and libertines

of the present age. Sole master of his actions, and of his estate, having last year had the misfortune to lose his father, he possesses the secret of gaining universal esteem and friendship. But you must not suppose, while I am thus praising him, that he has none of the qualities of youth; you will find him naturally gay, though too frequently giving way to melancholy reflections. He possesses many agreeable talents, and you will acknowledge with me, that I possess in him a very desirable friend."

Mr. Modbury had all that modesty which is ever attendant upon merit, and gave a proof of it by his answer to the praises of Mr. Cecil.

His visits at Glimmering became more and more frequent. Clara, far from finding him importunate, had a secret satisfaction in paying attentions to the man for whom her father had destined her, and frequently said to her

friend, "If I had known Mr. Modbury before Godwin, my life would have passed away in easy and cheerful tranquillity!" The attachment that Mr. Modbury expressed for little Godwin, drew tears of sensibility from his mother's eyes, and then she inwardly thought that he would be as good a father as a husband.

The feelings which almost unconsciously arose in Mrs. Milborn's heart, differed but little from love.—"She has then already forgotten Godwin!"—perhaps some of my readers will exclaim. Alas, where there is no esteem, virtuous love cannot last long!—Mr. Milborn's conduct, since his marriage, had been so thoroughly culpable, that Clara wept more for the death of the father of her child, than for the loss of her husband.

Miss Wilson observed with pleasure, the change that had taken place in the

heart of her friend. Before she let her suspect, however, that she had penetrated her secret, she wished to give Modbury time to merit the happiness which seemed to await him. That young man, being of the small number of those who gain upon acquaintance, Miss Wilson was the first to engage him to come frequently to the farm. An invitation so flattering gave him temerity enough to speak openly of his sentiments to Clara's friend. If he did not at once receive the certainty of his homage being accepted, he had, at least, every hope of being one day at the summit of what he deemed supreme happiness.

More than a year having now expired since Mr. Milborn's death, decency permitted that proposals might be made to his widow, and Mr. Modbury's did not appear either to shock, or be disagreeable to Clara.—“ My

father," said she, " must decide upon my answer."

" Then permit me, Madam," replied Modbury, " to set out to-morrow for Sumptuous Castle."

The haste that he was in, did not displease Clara; she proved it by a smile, and on the following day he began his journey.

CHAP. XXXIII.

GIDEON GROWELL, at the end of the 28th chapter, was left in the hands of a woman, who testified for him a sort of humanity which he had but little reason to expect among jailors.

The two men who had seized him and conducted him into his dungeon, were so far from feeling pity for him, that they conducted themselves in the grossest and harshest manner. He was doubly astonished, therefore, at the gentleness of the woman who was appointed to wait upon him.

During the first few days, she contented herself by only bringing what he

wanted; and notwithstanding the entreaties made by young Growell that she would prolong her visits, she would not consent to remain any longer than the time necessary for cleaning his room. By degrees, she began to sit down, and converse with him. Although destitute both of sense and education, the prisoner found a considerable degree of consolation in talking with her; he hoped, too, that by showing her a great deal of attention, he should gain her confidence, and draw from her an avowal of the motive that retained him captive. He frequently thought it was done by his father, who, wishing to prevent his union with Angelina, had conceived the idea of keeping him sequestered from the world, until her whom he loved, was established in it. The order for his departure following immediately that of his arrival—the care that had been taken

not to leave him to himself, and thus to prevent his conversing with any of the servants—the silence so scrupulously guarded respecting Lord Milborn's eldest daughter—the little satisfaction to be obtained from John's replies, when, in the beginning of the journey, he had asked of him some communication—all these circumstances united, with those which his mind suggested, appeared to be a thorough confirmation of his suspicions.

Whenever Gideon's attendant quitted his chamber, he remarked that she did not immediately go down stairs; but, on the contrary, frequently staid more than an hour after she had left him, before she descended. Anxious to know what could so long detain her in the little closet which conducted to his room, he one day lent an attentive ear to the key-hole. One evening, when she had retired with precipitation, he remarked

that she had appeared more than usually silent and melancholy. When she withdrew he listened, and heard her turn the key of a door. He plainly distinguished the sound of another voice, but could not hear the words it pronounced. He had scarcely time to reflect upon this extraordinary instance, when he again heard a door open, and close.—“It is certain,” said Gideon within himself, “that I am not alone here—Oh! could I but go to my companion in misery, it might be possible for us to unite our ideas and our strength, and at length break our chains.”—He passed the night in vague conjectures, but beheld no prospect of success.

Scarcely had day-break appeared, when he thought he heard some one open his door, and said instantly—“Who is there?”

“Be not afraid,” was the answer.

He knew his attendant's voice; but, by the feeble light of an aperture, which pierced through his high and narrow window, he perceived only a man approaching his bed.—“Rise, Gideon,” said he, “rise, and follow me.”

Young Gideon could not doubt its being his guard, clothed as the other sex. Gideon, trusting that he was going to be liberated, put no questions, but arose, and dressed himself hastily. As soon as he was ready, the woman took him by the hand, and led him out of the room, which she locked. Shortly after she stopped at another door in the passage, which she opened, and entered with the prisoner into a dungeon, like his own. After having given him a chair, she drew near the bed, and repeated the same words she had used to Gideon,—“Rise, and follow me.”—But here the scene changed. The person to whom the invitation, or,

rather order, was given, far from obeying with the alacrity of Gideon, inquired what they wanted with him, and whither they meant to conduct him. "I do not stir from this place," added he, "without being informed of the new intentions of the wretches who command you."

Scarcely had he uttered those words, when Gideon threw himself on the bed. "It is Alfred!" exclaimed he, taking the prisoner in his arms.

"Gideon!" replied Alfred, for it was really himself, "by what extraordinary combination of unhappy circumstances do we thus find ourselves reunited in a dungeon? This woman will, I trust, satisfy both your curiosity and mine."

"No, thank you," replied the guard, "not for the present, at least; we have no time to lose; it is in question to save the lives of two persons who ought to be very dear to you. Let us make

haste; a single minute may be the cause of everlasting regret. You are both going," added she, "to recover your liberty; it is to me you will owe that felicity; but it is necessary, on the score of prudence, that I should make my conditions. Swear to me, each of you, upon honour, that whatever you hear respecting me, you will forget all in favour of my repentance, and of the service I this day render you."—Then addressing herself to Alfred, "You do not yet know," said she, "more than the least part of the gratitude you owe me."

"We will swear," replied Gideon, "to whatever you please."

"That says nothing," said she.

"I swear," said Alfred, "to defend your life, even at the expence of my own."

“Enough, my child,” replied the woman; “I believe you, and will trust you.”

Alfred being dressed, they all went out together, armed with blunderbusses and pistols, and took the road to Sumptuous Castle. As they crossed the heath, they met the postillion, who had escaped the double danger of the murderous hands of the assassins and the fury of the horses. It was he who engaged the three strangers to assist in seizing and killing the four miscreants who wished to take away Lord Milborn's life, that of Lady Milborn, and of their daughter Harriot.—“Beloved Harriot!” said Alfred within himself, “you are then once more found, as well as my father; the certainty of that will not fail to give me the strength of Hercules.”

The villains were far from suspecting the danger that threatened them. Reflecting only on the expedition in which they had failed, they cursed the fatality of their stars, and began to think upon the means either of completing their crime or taking to flight.

Arrived at the door of the hut, the postillion, brave and enterprising, wished to go in first; but Gideon and Alfred not consenting, they all presented themselves together, bearing their arms upon their shoulders. The woman, less agitated, followed.—“Lay down your arms, villains!” cried Alfred, in a thundering voice, “or expect instant death.”

Guilt is usually cowardly, which was not here, however, the case with every individual. Two of the men fell upon their knees, and begged to be forgiven, but the other two put themselves in a

posture of defence. Evan was one of the latter, and five shots were fired off together. The postillion received one in the thigh, and fell; of the two suppliants, one fell dead on the spot, and the other was grievously wounded. Evan attempted to throw himself upon Alfred, who, suspecting his intention, fired at him, and the ball went through his right eye. Far from conceiving himself vanquished, the monster jumped upon the two bodies extended at his feet, holding a dagger in his hand, which he aimed at Alfred's heart.—“ Hold, brother!” said Gideon, who was yet ignorant that their ties of consanguinity existed only in imagination. Evan did not, however, pay the smallest attention to his words, and the amiable Alfred was at the moment of losing his life, when one of the miserable accom-

plices of Evan, who was lying on the ground, wallowing in his blood, seized one of his legs, and he fell by his side. Evan, furious, plunged his dagger into the heart of the man who had withheld his homicidal hand. The wretch expired instantly. The fourth brigand had, ever since the first shot he fired, remained inactive, and appeared only as a spectator of this scene of blood. All at once he seemed to recollect himself, and leaning over the man who had just breathed his last sigh,—“Poor Tom!” said he, “your brother has murdered you!—Happier than him and myself, you no longer dread the tortures which await us.”

A motion made by Evan, convincing Gideon and Alfred that those men wished to assassinate each other, they

were prevented, and bound strongly with the cords which they found.

The woman in disguise kept in the back-ground, and spoke not. The two young men were in a different situation, for they could neither assist themselves nor each other. Evan bellowed with rage, and refused to go with them; the other, whose hands were tied, swore that he would not forsake his children; but that, having partaken their crimes, he would die with them. On the other hand, could they leave the valorous postillion, who could not walk, and suffered dreadfully? A pistol-shot, which they heard on the heath, exciting their attention, they went out, and perceived a party of hunters on horseback, who seemed to be in search of something. Gideon ran up to them. "Have

you met a man, whom these desperadoes have wounded?" said the first whom young Gideon joined. "He was," continued he, "one of those who were conducting a carriage, the horses of which took fright, and which we were lucky enough to stop, before any accident happened to the travellers within it. We are come to see whether it be possible to give any assistance to the wounded man."

Gideon, who was not known to the hunters, explained to them exactly, and without naming any person, the terrible situation in which he found himself with his friend.

"So then, the villains are taken care of," said the stranger; "well! our people must take them to the next town;" and they sent off immediately four, who placed the dead and wound-

ed upon horses, and then conducted them to the magistrate. Evan was insensible, and they believed him to be dead.

It was necessary that Alfred and Gideon should be present, in order to establish proofs of the accusation; they went, therefore, to the distance of twelve miles. Three of the hunters accompanied them. After having ordered a relay of horses, belonging the hunt, the woman in man's clothes started an objection, saying that she did not wish for the present, for very serious reasons, to appear as an informer. "I faithfully promise you," said she to Alfred, "that, in the case of my avowal being necessary, I will present myself; but, till then, permit me to avoid making myself known." Seeing that he did not relish her refusal, "I have gone already too

far," continued she, "to draw back. My resolution is taken; I listen to nothing but the interest of my conscience; be assured then that my refusal, at this moment, is to serve you still better. As long as I do not appear openly, the criminals may flatter themselves with the hope of receiving pardon, and will not attempt to elude justice; besides, Mr. Milborn, I claim the promise that you have made me. The publicity that will be the necessary consequence of this affair, will not allow you to put your good intentions, respecting me, into execution, if you do not, before any other thing, enforce the condition, that my pardon shall follow my confession. Believe me: do not make mention of me this day. You have nothing more to say to the magistrate, but that, as you were going to Sumptuous Castle, you met

with a man who solicited your assistance, in order to secure some villains. Let Evan and his accomplice go; we shall see each other to-night at Pervious House, whither I am now going. It must be in the presence of Lord and Lady Milborn that I make my general confession."

She then quitted the road to take that to Pervious House, where I will leave her, and accompany Alfred, Gideon, and the three hunters, to the house of Sir Thomas Stapleton, the magistrate.

On their arrival, they found a considerable number of persons stationed at his door. Alfred and his four companions had some difficulty in getting through the crowd; they succeeded however, at last. In the first chamber they perceived the corpses of two men

extended on a board; near them, was the postillion lying on a mattress, and close to him was a surgeon, dressing his wound. Evan and his accomplice were sitting. The former covered his face with his handkerchief, less to conceal himself than to retain in its orbit the eye that was dropping out of his head. The magistrate was employed about finishing another business, and sent to request that the parties just announced would wait his leisure in the public room.

After the operation of dressing the postillion's wound had been performed, the surgeon advanced towards Evan, wishing to render him the same service, but he pushed him away with his hand. "You will not," said the surgeon, "accept my assistance?"—Evan made a

sign that he would not, and the other withdrew.

A few minutes after, the accused and the witnesses were brought forward. Gideon's heart ached at being forced to appear against him whom he still believed to be his brother, for he had not comprehended the words that despair had extorted from the old man in the dungeon. Alfred, Evan, and the other villain, likewise appeared. The dead man and the wounded one were brought in, and very soon after the audience-chamber became full of those whom curiosity had before attracted in the street.

The depositions of Alfred and of Gideon were plain and simple. They merely recited the facts as they stood. The hunters mentioned only their ha-

ving met with a carriage, which terrified horses were exposing to a thousand dangers, and which they had been fortunate enough to stop; they added, that two of their grooms mounted the horses, in order to conduct the coach to Pervious House, whither the persons within it were going.

The postillion was questioned in his turn: he said that he belonged to Mr. Growell, and that it was by his master's order that himself and his fellow-servant were conducting Lord and Lady Milborn, Miss Harriot, their daughter, and Mr. Grimsby, to Pervious House.

"Mr. Grimsby!" exclaimed at the same moment Sir Thomas and Alfred.

"It is the same gentleman," said the wounded postillion, "whom it was reported Lord Milborn had assassinated. They arrived yesterday, together

with Miss Harriot, at Sumptuous Castle."

"What a blessing!" said Alfred with enthusiasm.

Sir Thomas made him a sign not to interrupt the interrogatories. Then, addressing himself to the postillion, "Go on, my friend, go on."

Sir Thomas calling Evan by his name, inquired of him by what means he had left the prison at Hawfield, wherein he was confined; for of his escape the magistrate was ignorant, and what motive had induced him to fire at, and kill a postillion who was conducting Lord Milborn and his family.

"The event did not answer my expectation," replied Evan in a sepulchral voice; "I had resolved the death of the four persons in the carriage; and, in order to stop it, I wished to

kill one of the horses; I had no intention to harm this unfortunate man; my awkwardness was alone the cause of the injury done him."

"And what reason had you for wishing the destruction of Lord Milborn?"

"A thousand, that I never will reveal until the last extremity."

Sir Thomas, then addressing himself to Evan's accomplice, said, "Who are you?—I think I have seen you before,—Oh, yes, I remember.....it was you who appeared as a witness in that dreadful business of Lord Milborn's."

"You are in the right," replied he.

"But," continued Sir Thomas, "the present existence of Captain Grimsby proves that you were there a false witness."

"Of that, Sir Thomas," replied the man, "you are to judge as you please."

“What wretches these are!” muttered Sir Thomas between his teeth.

“Are we brought here to listen to invectives?” said Evan, rising. “Let us instantly be reconducted to prison; I am tired of looking at persons who displease me; besides, I want repose. You may imagine that I am not very comfortable.”

He then uncovered his face. Every one present uttered a scream of terror. His right eye clung only to some of the arteries; it hung over his cheek, which was covered with blood. Sir Thomas turned his head another way, unable to support the sight, and gave immediate orders for the two prisoners to be conducted to Hawfield jail. The postillion continued in the magistrate's house, as it was impossible to remove him without danger.

As Sir Thomas reconducted the five witnesses, taking Alfred by the hand, "I can perceive," said he, "with pleasure and inward satisfaction, that your father's innocence is on the eve of being established in all its splendor; believe that I shall not be the last to rejoice at it. That Evan is a terrible wretch!"

Then, turning to Gideon, "You," said he, "ought to congratulate yourself upon the discovery that your father has made."

"I don't know, Sir Thomas," replied Gideon, "to what you allude."

"What!" said he, "are you then ignorant that Evan is not your brother?—that he shot at your mother, who, fortunately, was only wounded; that he came at night to Sumptuous Castle in order to rob Mr. Growell; and that it is on account of all these odious pro-

ceedings that he was confined in prison at Hawfield, from whence, doubtless, he last night made his escape."

"All that you tell me of, Sir Thomas," replied Gideon, "is matter of surprise to me. I am but just arrived; I have not seen my father for a month or six weeks; but, great God! how much have you eased my mind! What misery has it been to me to think that I was allied by blood to a man loaded with the weight of his crimes!"

"Go then," said Sir Thomas, "to Sumptuous Castle; they will there confirm all that I have related."

On quitting Sir Thomas's house, the hunters bade the young people farewell, promising to see them again on the morrow. Alfred took the road to Previous House, and Gideon that to Sumptuous Castle.—Lord Milborn and

his family being the most interesting objects, the reader will be so good as to accompany Alfred to the paternal roof.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE first person Alfred met, on entering the court, was Emery, that good and faithful servant, who, upon seeing him, shouted for joy.—“Oh,” said he, as he flew towards the house, “excess of pleasure will this day kill me!” Then, raising his voice, he frequently repeated the name of Alfred. Harriot ran down, perceived her brother, and rushed into his arms.—“Oh, brother!” she exclaimed, “what a blessing it is to see you at this moment!—My father is here,—we returned with Captain Grimsby.”

“I know it,” replied Alfred, as he pressed her to his heart: “my dear Harriot, how overjoyed I am on beholding you again!”

They went together into the library, where the family was assembled. At the sight of an object so tenderly, and so every way worthy of being beloved, they all rose, embraced each other; father, mother, children, all congratulated themselves on his return. Mr. Growell likewise evinced the sincerity with which he partook of the general joy.

For more than two hours, descriptions on all sides were given of what each had undergone, since the fatal period when imperious necessity forced them to separate. Alfred's history was briefly as follows:

“I left this place with a determination not to return until I had found my

lord and Harriot. I was in the most dismal situation; my head, that seemed to be on fire, was not as it used to be; I believed, in short, that I was at the moment of being deprived of the use of reason; my only desire was to meet with Evan, and to engage him in a duel, for I had no doubt of his being one of our persecutors. I then thought, as I have been ever since persuaded, that he did not act alone in aiming at our destruction; but I knew only him, and I was resolved either to avenge my family, or die. It was, however, impossible for me to pursue my purpose after the affair that Evan had with Major Hartwell's son; he had taken wing, and no one knew what was become of him.

“I was proceeding in melancholy mood, a prey to comfortless reflections,

when night surprised me. The noise made by the steps of several persons who seemed to be walking behind me, raised my attention. I stopped, and perceived through the gloom the shadow of two figures; I made way for them to pass. As soon as they approached me, they both fell upon me; I had arms, and was able to defend myself; but, as I have already observed, I was so totally beside myself, that I did not think of taking any precaution. Being thus unexpectedly seized, it was not difficult for the two villains who held me, to master all my actions. They tied me to a tree, and while one of them absented himself, the other waited at a small distance from me. In a short time after, he who went away returned with two horses, he placed me upon one of them, and they both

mounted the other. I was in a very painful situation, my arms and my legs being tightly bound; they had placed me across the saddle, like a bag. We proceeded about three or four miles; the night was excessively dark; I saw neither the road we took, nor the house to which I was conducted. They dragged me, nearly insensible, to a bed, where, without doubt, I went to sleep in that situation. On awaking, I perceived, in the room in which I lay, a woman, who seemed to consider me with attention. She pronounced, in a low voice, some words, of which I could only hear a part. ‘Poor young man! —I cannot hate you.....Kill you! —never.....next to your mother..... to save your life!’

“As soon as she perceived that I no longer slept, she drew near me. ‘I

have orders,' said she, 'to take away your life:' then showing me a cup upon the chimney-piece, 'That,' continued she, 'is the poisoned liquor that I was to give you to drink; an interest, which you would think very natural if you were acquainted with the motive, leads me to protect your life; but, as in fulfilling this act of humanity, I should inevitably expose my own, it is proper that I should not neglect any means to conceal you from every eye; you must submit to speak very low, whenever I bring you what is necessary, and that you will consent to conceal yourself in a secret place that I know of, in case of their making a search here.' I promised her every thing, and she departed, assuring me that she would not fail to visit me every day.

“I cannot exactly say the time that I remained in that terrible prison; but I should suppose that I had been there about four months, when one night I was awakened by my attendant, accompanied by Gideon*.”

Scarcely had Alfred ended his history, when a servant informed him that a man wished to speak with him. He went out, and returned in a few minutes with his female guardian, who, as the reader must recollect, was dressed in man's clothes. As soon as Lady Milborn had looked at her, she cried out, “Ah, it is Lucy, my son Alfred's nurse!”

The woman dropped upon her knees.

“Your ladyship,” said she, “does not deceive yourself, and would to God

* Here Alfred gave an account of all that has been recited in the preceding chapter.

that I had never had a nurse child! I should be still innocent and happy."

"Rise, Mrs. Dispark," replied Lady Milborn, "that is, I think, your husband's name; rise, and be assured that, whatever may be your faults, I grant you pardon beforehand. Alfred has told me he owes his life to you; that must convince you of our everlasting gratitude."

"Ah, my lady, if there were nothing more than faults, I should tremble less in your presence. Alas! in the confession that I must make, I shall be obliged to avow crimes."

"Nurse, you make me shudder!"

"My God! my God! my lady; what will it be when you know all? Mr. Milborn speak in behalf of her who has nourished you with her milk; obtain

of my lord and of my lady that I shall not be brought to justice!"

"We will swear it to you, nurse," said at once Lord and Lady Milborn.

Lady Milborn forced Mrs. Dispark to sit down, and ordered a glass of wine to revive her spirits, and to calm her agitation; every one, after that, was disposed to listen to her.

"The beginning," said she, "of your misfortunes is that of"

At that moment a servant came in, to announce Mr. Growell's arrival, who was dismounting from his horse in the court.

"In the name of heaven!" said Mrs. Dispark, "hide me! let him not see me!" and she spoke with a terrified and distracted look. Harriot conducted her hastily into a little closet,

and had not time to shut the door, before Mr. Growell entered the room.

From his serene and composed countenance, every one judged that he was ignorant of the events that had taken place since the morning. He told them, that as he was astonished at not seeing the carriage return, which was to have brought back Aurea, he had determined to come on horseback to meet her, and had rode insensibly as far as Pervious House. Lady Milborn inquired after her friend.—“She is much better,” he replied, “and hopes soon to be able to return your ladyship her personal thanks for the care and attention you have lavished upon her.”

The conversation fell upon Evan.—“The news is,” said Growell, “that

he escaped from prison. He is a monster."

"I will not longer conceal from you," said Lord Milborn, "the dreadful dangers from which Lady Milborn, Harriot, Mr. Grimsby, and myself escaped this morning. The fear of causing you fresh affliction, had determined me to conceal it from your knowledge; but as you must sooner or later hear of it, you may as well learn it from us."

He then informed him in what manner Evan and three other men attacked them on the road; of the death of one of the postillions, &c. &c.

Mr. Growell listened to this terrible recital, and seemed penetrated with grief.—"Great God!" he exclaimed, as soon as Lord Milborn had done

speaking, "will you never then deign to protect innocence and virtue? My heart, my dear friend, bleeds at the idea of the continual series of torments of which you and yours have so long been the victims. Take courage; I am persuaded that you will soon see the end of your sufferings; yes, I rejoice in the belief that your enemies will at length be vanquished; we shall then, at least, know the scoundrels, and with what pleasure should I see them mount the scaffold, upon which they wished to see you!—Apropos, my worthy friend, do you yet persist in the intention of surrendering yourself prisoner at Hawfield, in order to bring forward again your wonderful trial?"

"To-morrow!" replied Lord Milborn; "there shall be no delay, that is my invariable resolution."

“Your friends,” said Mr. Growell, “ought not to suffer it; permit me to lay down ten thousand pounds, nay double, or treble: my whole fortune, if necessary, shall become your security.”

“Do not mention it, my dear Growell,” replied Lord Milborn, “I repeat that nothing can possibly make me change my resolution.”

The noise of a carriage, now entering the court, surprised every one. Who could it be? No person was expected; Mr. Growell looked agitated, Alfred went out to see who it was, and was extremely astonished on perceiving Mrs. Growell carried by two of her servants. She seemed ready to expire. Her son, Gideon, mournfully followed her. Alfred opened the door himself, and announced Mrs. Growell.—“My wife!”

exclaimed Mr. Growell," and he turned pale as he spoke.

"How?—what?"—and he fell back upon his seat.

Lady Milborn ran to meet her friend, and had her laid on a sofa. The miserable patient was scarcely sensible: every one, excepting her husband, ran to her assistance; it was some time before she came to herself; at length she opened her eyes, and perceiving Lady Milborn in the attitude of holding salts, and with an anxious and melancholy countenance, she gently pushed her away.—"Respectable woman," said she in a languid voice, "do not any longer waste your delicate attentions upon a monster, who has, during so many years, caused you such heavy afflictions!"

"Almighty God!—what are you

saying?" answered Lady Milborn, as she drew several paces back.

"You, my friend, *you* a monster?"

"I never," replied Mrs. Growell, "I never was your friend; I only pretended to be such, that you might more easily become my victim."

"Abominable woman!" cried out Mr. Growell, crossing his wife, "you shall tell no more."

As Mr. Grimsby had constantly kept his eyes upon him since his exclamation on Mrs. Growell's arrival, he instantly perceived his intention, and had time enough to lay hold of him at the moment he was going to use violence against his wife, and to seize a dagger, which he grasped firmly in his hand. In vain did he endeavour to overcome Captain Grimsby, who held him tightly by the collar.

“ By all the sufferings of which he and I are the sole cause,” said Mrs. Growell, “ I implore you to hold back his murderous arm; prevent his wrenching from me the little life that still remains, until at least I have had sufficient time to make my peace with heaven, by making you every painful and humiliating avowal.”

Lord Milborn called Emery, and ordered him to bring cords, with which they bound Mr. Growell. His wife having desired that he might witness her confession, he was tied to his chair, roaring furiously; a sort of black foam issued from his mouth, and every feature became distorted by convulsion.—“ Yes,” said he, “ my lord, it is that viper and myself who have directed every blow that has fallen upon you

and your odious family for above four years, and twenty-four have elapsed since I first began to hate you. Look," continued he, "look at that charming young man," pointing to Alfred: "you have educated him with every tender care; you believe him to be your son; he is the son of a villain who was executed for the numberless crimes that he committed."

"Oh God!—oh God!"—replied Alfred, raising his hands to heaven in matchless agony, "recal, recal those dreadful words!"—

"And Evan," said Mr. Growell, "whom disgrace and infamy attend, owes his existence to the virtuous Lady Milborn."

"Oh no, no," replied Lady Milborn, "impossible!—Spare me that disgrace,

oh heaven!" and she sunk into the arms of her daughter, Ancelina, who was standing near her.

"Believe it not!" cried out the woman concealed in the closet; when, darting from her hiding-place, she threw herself at the feet of Lady Milborn.—
"The monster knows that Evan is no more your son than his own: he is the child of my unhappy sister, and these fatal exchanges formed the commencement of my crimes. As to you, Mr. Alfred, well may you deplore your existence; it is to you a calamity, for it is from those tigers you received your life. They never deserved such a son as you are."

"And what," said Lady Milborn, "became of my boy, whom I intrusted to your care?"

"He is dead, my lady, which gave

birth to the idea, as I shall inform you, of putting Mr. Growell's son in the place of the little orphan of whom he spoke, and to give to Mr. Growell her own child, making him believe that it was his son."

"Alfred is my son," said Mrs. Growell, half-raising her head, while a light ray of joy animated her cadaverous countenance. "Oh, how warmly should I appreciate that blessing of Providence, were I but worthy of being his mother! Deign, oh deign, to approach nearer to her who dare not pronounce you her son!"

Alfred sunk on his knees by the side of the sofa upon which Mrs. Growell lingered. — "May heaven," said he, "pardon you!" as he pressed her hand to his lips.

"Intercede for me," replied she,

“virtuous child ! the prayers of a pure heart are acceptable to God !”—She laid down her head, and preserved an awful silence.

“Woman, weak as guilty !” said Mr. Growell, as he gazed upon his wife and Alfred with a look of ferocious horror, “the approach of death intimidates you ; recal, then, to your memory all the cruelties of which you have been guilty. Was it not you who desired that, even in your own presence, she of whom you now meanly implore pardon, should be dishonoured by a base ravisher ? Have you forgotten with what savage joy you delighted in the torments of Lord Milborn, and the agonies of his daughter, when you in some measure forced me to accompany you, clothed in the habits of your sex, to Wooded Priory, where we detained our victims,

and how much you regretted that Harriot's state of insensibility deprived you of the happiness of seeing her violated before her father's eyes? Do you not remember, likewise, when on the first attack made upon Lord Milborn in the wood near his house, that you insisted upon one of his eyes being cut out, and that particular care should be taken to disfigure him by wounds, as much as possible? Which of us endeavoured most to light up, in Evan's breast, the flame which burned there for Harriot; and what other but the most abandoned of women could advise him to violence, in order to satisfy his infamous desires?"

"You enumerate *my* crimes," replied Mrs. Growell in a voice uncommonly strong, considering the weakness of her state, "and you pass over your

own in silence. Well, then, it is my place to give their odious recital. It was *you* who invented, and yourself drew up, the false bond, to obtain, under the appearance of friendship, the regard of those whom it was your intention to immolate. It was *you* who advised Evan to assassinate Captain Grimsby, that Lord Milborn might be accused of it. It was *you*, who, seeing Alfred determined to take to Hawfield the anonymous letter received by Lady Milborn, sent your infernal accomplices to strew over a part of the road, through which he was to pass, a glutinous matter, that his horse might stumble, fall, and, perhaps, kill him. It was *you*, who, on perceiving that Lord Milborn's innocence was likely to be manifested, offered to the turnkey ten thousand pounds to have the prisoner taken

away, under pretence of rescuing him, against his inclination. Your orders were to give the porte-folio to the turnkey at the moment of departure, then to have him murdered, that the public might believe it was a fresh crime of Lord Milborn's, and likewise to take back from him the porte-folio, as was punctually observed. It was *you*, too, who, fearful of the attachment that poor Gideon had for Ancelina, surprised and disappointed by his return, sent him under pretence of his going into Wales, having already planned the manner of his being forcibly seized: and, oh, excess of horror! it was *you* who last night offered six thousand pounds to gain over the new turnkey, that he might suffer Evan and John to escape. They both came to you at five in the morning, and received from you

orders to wait in the little cabin the passing by of the coach, and to assassinate the four persons it contained. That is not all. I shall finish by the most dreadful, and, I hope, the last of your crimes. This night....." A vomiting of blood prevented Mrs. Growell from continuing; when they drew near to assist her, life had fled.

Alfred, the unfortunate Alfred, could not support the horrible detail of the crimes of his parents, made by themselves, with a ferocity unexampled. Towards the close of his mother's revolting discourse, he sunk senseless on the ground. Harriot was the first who perceived it; she hastened to raise him, held to him salts and essences, and had the satisfaction to see him revive, and witness the profound grief into which his situation had plunged her.

The tender Gideon, as much afflicted as his brother, testified his despair by long and piercing groans. Is there, indeed, a situation more dreadful than was that of those two virtuous and amiable young men, the sons of two monsters, whose lives were a continued series of execrable actions? They did not dare to raise their eyes; shame and confusion were depicted on their countenances, which they endeavoured to hide. Ancelina went to sit by the side of Gideon, and took one of his hands, which she pressed in her own. The young man, fully sensible of that affecting mark of pity, melted into tears; the other spectators had fallen into a state of stupor; terrified by all that they had heard, they seemed as if they neither could believe, nor yet doubt it.

Lord Milborn suddenly arose, and

running to the door, said, as he withdrew,—“Let us fly this horrible scene, my very soul is shaken by it! I feel ready to sink into the earth.” As Alfred and Gideon did not dare to accompany him, he called them, and, taking a hand of each,

“You,” said he, “are each of you become still dearer to me! Alfred, you are still my son; and for you, Gideon, if you do not object to it, I adopt you.”

They both fell at Lord Milborn’s feet.

“My children,” said he, “my lot is better than yours; you find in me only a father, as there are many, no doubt; I gain two sons, and such sons as are rarely to be met with.”

He raised them, and went into the library, where he was followed by Lady Milborn, her two daughters, Captain

Grimsby, the nurse, and Miss Aurea, whose eyes ceased not to weep. Lord Milborn gave orders that Mr. Growell should be watched, and he remained in the chamber with the corpse of his wife. Lord Milborn chose to consult his lady and Captain Grimsby, before he determined upon taking any measures against the two criminals; but it appeared necessary to them all to hear what the nurse had to say. Whatever that should be, it would surely influence their conduct; they must hear her, therefore, before they could act. She began, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. XXXV.

“ I AM, as your ladyship knows, a native of a small village near Peace House, which belonged to Mr. Farington, your father. It was situated, unfortunately, within two miles of Fodder Lodge; thence arises the source of *your* misfortunes, and of *my* unpardonable faults.

“ Gilbert Polesworth saw you, and conceived for you a passion the most violent. Disdaining his love, you imperiously refused the acceptance of his heart and his hand; he vowed revenge, and has succeeded but too well.”

“What,” cried Lady Milborn, interrupting Mrs. Dispark, “is Polesworth of Fodder Lodge Mr. Growell?”

“Himself!” replied Mrs. Dispark; “his residence in India, from eighteen to twenty years, has produced in him such a wonderful alteration, that it is impossible for any one, who formerly knew him, now to recollect him. You, my lord, have not, I suppose, forgotten a Miss Juliana Milton, whom your parents wished you to marry, but who became the wife of Gilbert Polesworth.”

“I comprehend you,” replied Lord Milborn, “that Juliana was Mrs. Growell.”

“Exactly so; your contempt of her made her your most barbarous enemy. Your subsequent marriage with Miss Lucretia Farington, from whom Gilbert pretended to have received the most un-

pardonable insult, excited a double hatred in the hearts of those malevolent beings. One would be tempted even to believe that they became united for the sole purpose of sharing an equal interest in your ruin.

“The two young brides became pregnant almost at the same time. I was chosen by you, my lady, to be your nurse. The little boy was remarkably delicate. The infant to whom Mrs. Polesworth gave birth, was confided to the care of my sister, who lived near my father, in a house very contiguous to that which was inhabited by my husband and myself. My sister Nancy was almost constantly at Fodder Lodge, and from thence she brought, almost every day, money and presents. I perceived that my husband was displeased at my not meeting with the same good

fortune as Nancy; he reproached me with it, as if I had been in fault. From bad language he came to blows. As I wept and lamented my hard fate, my sister came to me, and I informed her of the cruelty and injustice of Dispark. — ‘Well, then,’ said she, ‘if that is all, console yourselves; I am going to furnish you with the means of being as generously treated as myself; but before I say any more, swear to me, each of you, upon oath, that you will observe the most profound secresy on the subject of that which I am going to confide to you.’—We took the oath she required.

‘Know then,’ continued she, ‘that the father and the mother of our nurse-children have received, as they say, the greatest injuries from Mr. and Mrs. Milborn; they are determined, cost

what it may, to be revenged on them, and this is what I have to propose to you, from them: you know the man called Big Philip was taken, about two months since, for having murdered a person whom he had robbed upon the highway; he is sentenced to be hung; and his execution is, I understand, to take place at Norwich in two days.—He leaves three children, one of which is about the age of our nurselings. I have already spoken to Mrs. Philip, and she consents to sell me her youngest son for six guineas; you must pass him off for Mrs. Milborn's, and we will send the little Alfred to the Foundling.'

"Never! never!" I exclaimed, as I pressed him to my breast, "never will I consent to be separated from this dear little angel, still less to give my milk to the child of a murderer."

‘Lucy,’ said my sister, ‘you shall have a hundred guineas.’”

“Were you to promise me a thousand, I would not be guilty of so atrocious an action. Great God! *I* nurse a child of that infamous Philip’s!”

‘If it is *that* which is displeasing to you,’ replied Nancy, ‘we can settle matters in another way, and we shall all be gainers by it; but we must take great pains to prevent the imposition from being discovered. Listen to me. I will give the six guineas to Philip’s wife; take her brat, and place it, together with little Alfred, in the hospital at Norwich. I will give you, in the place of the latter, the son of Mr. Polesworth, whom you will call Alfred; I shall say, that *my* William is dead, and I shall continue to nurse him by the name of Evan. By these means we shall con-

tinue to receive the emoluments, you from Mrs. Milborn, and I from Mrs. Polesworth.'

'That is not so much amiss,' said my husband; 'it seems, Nancy, that you understand pretty well your interest; and what is Mr. Polesworth to give for the management of this fine affair?'

'The same as to yourself; one hundred guineas.'

"Well!" continued Dispark, "let me have fifty of them, and Lucy shall do as you desire."

"No, no!" cried I, with tears, "I will keep my child; my dear Alfred! let them do what they will, you shall not leave me."

"Vainly did I flatter myself,—fate was against me! My sister did not leave us until ten at night; I had con-

fided to her my nurseling, while I was busied in preparing the supper. We were scarcely in bed, when the child began to cry; I took him in my arms, and he died within half an hour, in dreadful convulsions. My grief was unbounded; I wept and groaned throughout the night. In the morning Nancy brought Mr. Polesworth's child in her arms. I told her of my misfortune, and she endeavoured to console me. As she was vainly striving to do so, my father came for her; she begged of me to take the child, saying, that she should very soon return. But she did not until night. During that long interval, her nurseling had its wants, and cried in the most piercing manner. I took it in my arms; it was silent, and smiled. He was in beauty a perfect cherubim. Of himself he came to my breast.

‘That is your wish,’ said I ‘my love,’ as I kissed him; ‘well, then, I will nurse thee!’ When my sister returned, the little one was at my breast: she was delighted as well as my husband. Ah! would to God that I had possessed courage sufficient to resist at that moment! The fear of discovery would not have since made me, in some measure, an accomplice in the crimes of others.

“The supposed Alfred and Evan thrived surprisingly. Their mutual parents loaded both my sister and myself with benefits. As soon as mention was made of the children’s being returned, Nancy, who could not support the idea of living far from hers, solicited and obtained Mrs. Polesworth’s permission to enter her service, and that Tom, her eldest son, should be the companion of

the little Evan. My brother-in-law was lately dead, and it was of great advantage to his widow to be placed with her child.

“ You, my lord, were so perfectly satisfied with the state of Alfred when I brought him to you, that you had the goodness to make me a present of ten guineas, as my reward. As long as you remained in the country, I had frequently the pleasure of seeing my nurseling, whom I loved tenderly; and he was deserving of that tenderness, since, from his earliest infancy, he had been ever gentle, affectionate, humane, and susceptible. All those amiable qualities increased with his age; there can be but one description given of that charming young man.

“ The death of your lordship’s father, followed by that of your eldest

brother, having put you into possession of the title and property of your family, you left us, to form an establishment in London. That proceeding was, as Nancy informed me, like the falling of a thunder-bolt over the heads of Mr. and Mrs. Polesworth; you were escaping them, and, by so doing, depriving them of the possibility of injuring you. Their hatred of you allowed of no hesitation; their first idea was to follow you; but fortune did not second their views. Mr. Milton, who was believed to be rich, died insolvent. His daughter and his son-in-law found themselves compelled to sell Fodder-Lodge. Out of the immense fortune upon which they had so fully depended, a bare three thousand pounds a year was all that remained. It was not, therefore, the moment to put in practice their re-

venge against you; they did not renounce it, but waited a more favourable period for its execution. It was first necessary to think of the means of appearing again with splendour. Mrs. Polesworth had an uncle, on her mother's side, who had embarked for Bengal, three years before. Several travellers had affirmed that Mr. Growell was become very rich; Mrs. Milton had written to him; but, receiving no answer, supposed he was dead, or wished not to correspond with his family. Of one or the other, no doubt was entertained. In a short time after Miss Milton's marriage, she fell into accidental conversation with an officer lately arrived from Madras; she spoke to him of Mr. Growell, who was, he assured her, one of the richest inhabitants of Black-

town*. According to his account, Juliana's uncle had no longer either a wife or children.

They now determined to go in pursuit of the opulent Growell; but not chusing that their plans should be known, they gave out that they were going to settle in Wales.

“Before they set out for the port where they were to embark, Mr. Gilbert proposed to my father and myself to follow their fortunes, promising us all a provision, if their own situation should change for the better. I have frequently since reflected, that they

* Madras, situate on the coast of Coromandal, forms two towns, one of which is named White. It contains a fort, and is scarcely a mile in circumference. The other, named Black, is near two miles round, and peopled by merchants, excessively rich.

wished to take us, in order to prevent Lord and Lady Milborn's finding out the fraud practised upon the children. It was their greatest pleasure to know that they were wasting their care and their tenderness upon the son of a felon, for such they believed Alfred. We accepted their offer. My husband, who was a mason, had perished miserably about three months before; and therefore, as my father and my sister were to go, nothing remained that could bind me to England.

“I shall not enter into any detail respecting their residence at Madras, for I have only undertaken to give you the history of those monsters as far as relates to myself; I will therefore briefly observe, that they found their uncle even in a more brilliant situation than had been represented to them; that

they were joyfully received and acknowledged; and that, after having lived thirty years with the magnificence of a potentate, Mr. Growell died, leaving his whole property to his niece and her husband, upon condition only that they and their children should in future bear his name.

“We inhabited that beautiful country eighteen years. Mr. Polesworth’s family, now become Growell, was composed of two sons and two daughters. As soon as they could, they remitted a large portion of their property to England in one ship; after which they embarked in another with the remainder.

“I learned from my father and my sister, who possessed the entire confidence of their master, that their impatience was excessive to return, and to find out the innocent objects of their

immortal hatred. It was doubtless the ardent desire of hastening their destruction, that caused them to leave India. As soon as we disembarked, we took the road to London, where Mr. Growell made every inquiry after you. It was not difficult for him to learn, that you resided constantly at Milborn-Hall. He found it just as easy to become possessor of Sumptuous Castle. He had brought with him tons of gold. Thus provided, is there any thing impossible?

“As soon as Mr. Growell became informed of every thing concerning you and your family, he assembled us all in his wife’s chamber, my father, my sister, her son, and myself.—‘We are now,’ said he, ‘almost at the moment when you are to prove to us your attachment, and to receive a salary

adequate to the importance of the services we expect from you. Swear to me, all four, that you will implicitly obey whatever I direct relative to those abominable Milborns; and I in return swear to you all, that I will make you the donation of an estate, valued at twenty thousand pounds, which is situate in Wales, and of which I yesterday concluded the purchase.'

"My father, Nancy, and my nephew stared in amazement. To come into possession of such considerable property, they would, I believe, have stopped at nothing.—'We swear,' said they all together, 'that we will obey you in every thing which it shall please you to command us.'

"And you, Lucy," said Mr. Growell, "why do you not join with your

relations, in assuring me of your fidelity?"

"Because," replied I, "I cannot promise to assist in injuring the child I nursed."

"But," continued Mr. Growell, "you know that he is the son of a man who died upon the gallows."

"I know that I suckled him, and that I love him."

"Well, then," replied Mr. Growell, "we will have some consideration for your dear Alfred."

"Come, come, Lucy," said my father, "swear, like ourselves, that you will obey our masters in whatever they may require of you."

"My God!" replied I, "what a terrible oath!"

"Remember," continued Mr. Gro-

well, "that in all this it concerns only the guilty Milborns."

"Tell me, then, what they have done to you."

"They have attempted my husband's life and my own," replied Mrs. Growell.

"In that case," said I, "they deserve no pity. I take, therefore, the same oath that my father, my sister, and my nephew have already done."

"There," said Mr. Growell, "are the deeds of the estate. On the day of the destruction of our enemies, I will present you with the gift."

"How severely did I reproach myself with the dreadful oath that had been extorted from me, when I was informed by my sister, that their implacable hatred had no other subject than my lord's former refusal to marry Juliana

Milton, and Lady Milborn's to unite her fate to that of Gilbert Polesworth. I then observed to my father, that, in consequence of their deceiving me, I felt myself no longer bound to keep my word.—‘Expect then, Lucy,’ he replied, ‘to be interrogated by the grand tribunal; for it is necessary you should know, that an exchange of children, of which you are guilty, is a crime that the law punishes with death.’—I turned pale, and was near fainting., ‘Oh, my father!’ replied I, ‘am I then really guilty?’—‘You are, Lucy; and believe me, Mr. and Mrs. Growell will not show you any mercy. Rather follow our example; consent to every thing, and forget not that twenty thousand pounds deserve a sacrifice.’ I consented; but, alas, it was with an aching heart!’

“We all set out for Sumptuous Castle, but Mr. Growell was too prudent to expose us to the danger of being seen by Lord Milborn and his family. He was so very much altered, that he suffered no apprehension of being known; and Mrs. Growell, having had the smallpox at Madras, did not retain the smallest resemblance of her former self.

“We all lived separately. My father and sister inhabited a small house situate between Sumptuous Castle and Milborn-Hall, and I occupied another on the opposite side, and farther off; these two houses were in a desolate part of the country. Mr. Growell ordered us to build a subterraneous chamber in each. There were two such in mine; I had therefore no occasion to build. Mr. Growell, among

his several journeys, made the discovery of Wooded Priory, an uninhabited house, in which he determined on confining his victims. He sent, therefore, my father and my nephew thither to prepare a chamber for their reception. The windows were barred, and bolts fastened to the doors.

“ You already know that it was Mr. Growell, who, after forging the bond, caused it to be presented to you; you thought yourself under the highest obligation for the six thousand pounds which he lent you, not one of which ever came out of his purse.

“ My father, whom the prospect of a large fortune had rendered almost as villanous as his masters, had engaged, in case of necessity, the assistance of three or four desperadoes in the neighbourhood. Lord Milborn was attacked

and mutilated: it was those villains who undertook, and committed the deed. Things were so conducted, that Mr. Growell was not only to arrive after the mischief had been done, but that he should still have the appearance of saving Lord Milborn's life, which would redouble his friendship and his confidence.

“As soon as Lady Milborn was taken, for Mrs. Growell's heart longed to enjoy the despair of her rival, it was resolved that they should procure for Evan the facility of obtaining by violence the good graces of Harriot, which would oblige her parents to give her to him for wife. That amiable girl, from her perfect resemblance to her mother, was the object of Mrs. Growell's antipathy, and she wished that, in becoming the wife of Evan, he might ren-

der her the most miserable of women. The arrival of the brave Alfred in the wood prevented the execution of that horrible design. It was Mrs. Growell, who, disguised in a mask, came to enjoy the agonies both of the mother and the daughter.

“Lady Milborn was received at Wooded Priory by my father and Nancy. It is needless for me to repeat what Mr. Growell told you relative to the nocturnal visit that his wife paid to Lady Milborn. The man whom she brought with her, and to whom her ladyship rendered justice, by putting him to death, was one of those villains whom my father had engaged.

“The arrival of the company commanded by Captain Grimsby, alarmed and terrified my sister; she believed they were come to seize her, and went

to give information to her father, at that time in Lady Milborn's apartment, when they both saved themselves by a precipitate flight from Wooded Priory.

“ This disappointment became the source of much regret to Mrs. Growell, who had delighted in going frequently to oppress and to torment the innocent Lady Milborn. As soon as it was known at Sumptuous Castle that her ladyship was returned to Milborn-Hall, Mr. Growell and his wife went there, and redoubled every act of duplicity and hypocrisy, to prevent any suspicion falling on them.

“ Mr. Grimsby's stay at Brough, and his intimacy with the Milborn-Hall family, suggested to Mr. Growell the infernal idea of having him assassinated, and that Lord Milborn should stand accused of the murder. They fixed on

the night of the entertainment, and it was Evan himself who stabbed Mr. Grimsby; and, who endeavouring to imitate his voice, which he had frequently practised for the occasion, made use of the horrible expressions so strongly imputed to Lord Milborn. By a refinement of cruelty, and in order that every proof should condemn the innocent, Mr. Growell had given orders to my father to call out Lord Milborn whilst the murder was committing; he instructed him in what he was to say, and particularly insisted that his hands should be full of blood, and that he should find means of staining those of Lord Milborn in the same dreadful manner.

“Informed of every plot against you, I shuddered without daring to manifest the horror with which so many

crimes inspired me, and of which my family partook. My sister, owing to her extravagant fondness for Evan, blindly followed the barbarous orders that she received from that monster, and from those to whom he believed himself indebted for his life. She once read in my eyes how much I revolted at the participation in some measure of the calamities which bore hard upon an estimable family, and she threatened to inform against me, as the only person who had thought of, or undertaken to make an exchange of the children. Fear compelled pity to remain the inmate of my heart, and I became, if not the accomplice, at least the confidant of all the atrocities they committed.

“I knew the infamous part which my father, assuming the name of Richard

Plunkett, was to play at the Sessions-House on the day when every one believed that the failure of witnesses would be Lord Milborn's acquittal. As I neither could, nor dared show myself openly, I determined to disguise my hand-writing, and to send you, my lady, an anonymous letter. My intention was to raise your suspicions against those among whom you habitually lived; but my intention could not be fulfilled, as I learned that your excessive attachment for the Growells had tempted you to show them my letter. Fortunately, my hand-writing was not discovered; and the idea of the secret being found out, excited terrible apprehensions in the atrocious society; it was at that time that Nancy placed in me a confidence, which set my heart at ease. She assured me that Mr. Grims-

by was not dead of his wounds. 'When Evan,' said she, 'had stabbed Captain Grimsby, and imbrued the earth with the blood that gushed from his wounds, he took him on his shoulders, and conveyed him to the little park-gate, where my father and my son expected him, who were provided with horses, in order to take the corpse, and throw it into the river Ivel. Arrived on its bank, my father laid hold of Captain Grimsby, whom he believed to be dead, and was astonished on perceiving that he still breathed. The idea then came into his head, that it would be proper for him to make use of every precaution, in order to oblige Mr. Growell to keep his promise, in case he should be inclined to violate it. All villains mistrust one another. By preserving Mr. Grimsby's life, he might, he thought,

command Mr. Growell's accomplices. The subterraneous chamber which Mr. Growell had built in his house, seemed to him exactly adapted to receive the wounded man: he therefore conducted him to it, and explained his reasons to Nancy and Tom, who approved of them. Captain Grimsby's wounds were dressed, and he was carefully attended by my sister. Their intention was,—I shudder as I repeat it! but I have promised the whole truth,—to put us in possession of the promised estate the moment we had poisoned Mr. Grimsby, in order that this last murder should obliterate every trace of their crimes.

“Perceiving that, notwithstanding all the infernal measures they had employed, in order to convince the judge and the public that Lord Milborn was

the murderer of Captain Grimsby,—perceiving, I say, that there was not sufficient proof to convict Lord Milborn, and that, if he were acquitted, my father would meet with the punishment of the pillory as a false witness, Mr. Growell set to work every idea of his own execrable imagination, and put in execution all which Mrs. Growell has just reproached him with in your presence.

“The condemnation and the disgrace of effigy were inevitable, and consequently followed; to which were added the confiscation of your estates, &c.

“Lord Milborn and Miss Harriot were conducted to Wooded Priory. Tom attended them; their fate was determined upon, from the moment that Miss Milborn should become the prey of my nephew, Tom; her death and that of her father were to termi-

nate their sufferings. Mrs. Growell had reserved to herself the pleasure of giving to them the poisoned cup; she longed to enjoy the barbarous satisfaction of making herself known to him whom she had loved, at the moment when he was wafting his last sigh to heaven.

“The resolution taken by Alfred to find out his father and sister, was a subject of uneasiness to Mr. Growell; he dreaded lest chance should conduct him to Wooded Priory, and, in order to avoid that misfortune, he caused him to be followed, seized, and conducted to my small habitation. I received orders to put him to death on his arrival. Great God, what a commission! and how remote was I from being either able or willing to execute it!—Fortunately they were ignorant of there being two subterraneous chambers; I

concealed him in one of them, and, on the following day informed John that Mr. Milborn was no more. He has told you in what manner I conducted myself towards him.

“Dissatisfied on leaving Wooded Priory, that Miss Milborn had counteracted her designs, Mrs. Growell returned to Sumptuous Castle, and complained to her husband of the want of alacrity that she had remarked in Tom, relative to the execution of her orders. It is true, indeed, that my nephew owed to me the sorrow he felt on witnessing the situation and sufferings of Miss Milborn. Mr. Growell, fearing that something like pity should invade the breasts of his accomplices, went to my father, threatening him with his everlasting hatred and resentment, should either himself, or any one belonging him,

show any mercy to the Milborn family. 'Do not suppose,' said he, 'that you already hold what I have promised you ; you shall possess it only when the last of the race that I abhor shall have ceased to live. I am going immediately to Wooded Priory, and shall not fail to treat your grandson as he deserves, for his having dared for a moment to delay the execution of the orders given him by Mrs. Growell.'

"My father was disgusted by the tone of voice and the imperious commands of his master, whom he had no longer regarded as such, since their mutual crimes seemed to put them on an equality. 'How is this?' said he to my sister ; 'does he dare to threaten, when he ought to tremble?'—From that moment my father resolved, if he could do it without danger to himself and us, to

forsake at once the cause of the Gro-wells, and devote himself to yours.

“In a few days after that, he went for you, and conducted you, together with Lord Milborn and Miss Harriot, to his house, when my sister conducted you into the subterraneous chamber, where you found Captain Grimsby.

“The unexpected arrival of Gideon at Sumptuous Castle was a source of mortification both to his father and mother. They dreaded the penetrating eye of a lover. They sent me orders, therefore, to prepare the subterraneous chamber, in order, they said, to confine the young man there until they had completed the total destruction of your family. John, who attended Gideon, was the same postillion who had wounded Mr. Milborn's dog, at the time of his meeting the carriages, which were

conducting Mr. and Mrs. Growell to Sumptuous Castle. The better to succeed with you, they pretended to have turned him away; but, as he was at the bottom of all their secrets, they sent him only to a small distance. He came to live in the house which I occupied. His master had him therefore always under his eye, whenever he wished to employ him relative to his infernal machinations. I received and treated Gideon as well as I could, and strove to conceal from him the knowledge of his having so near to him a companion in misery.

“I perceived my sister coming, one day, to my house in a disastrous condition. Her countenance was inflamed, and she appeared to me to be nearly choked by passion. ‘The Growells,’ said she, ‘are making fools of us. I am

not only convinced they do not mean to give us the estate, but they deny whatever is necessary for my dear child. Poor Evan is now at my house, with grief and despair in his heart. If you were to see the abominable letter written to him by Mr. Growell, you would shudder; and yet he only asked him for two thousand pounds; but he is resolved to go, either this night or another, and to force the dirty miser to give him that sum; if he does not obtain it, he is determined, he says, to put him to death. I never before beheld him in such a paroxysm of rage; he has ordered me to conduct John to him, and it is for him that I am now come.' John came in at the same moment, and they set out together in a gig which Nancy had brought with her.

“ My indignation was at the height ;

a son, projecting the murder of his father, seemed to me the last degree of infamy. It struck me that no consideration, not even that of preserving my life, ought to induce me to keep silence respecting an intention so atrocious. I was on the point, then, of setting out for Sumptuous Castle, to inform Mr. Growell, when the recollection of my poor prisoner, Alfred, darted across my mind. Supposing I were to fall a victim to my zeal, that interesting young man must, if not discovered, perish of hunger ; and, if he were found, his death would be inevitable.—Dreadful alternative !—I determined, therefore, on employing the same measures which I had twice before adopted, relative to Lady Milborn. I wrote an anonymous letter to Mr. Growell, in which I informed him that Evan was not his son,

and that he was in the neighbourhood waiting for the night, to introduce himself into the castle, to rob, and, perhaps, to murder him. My information did not, however, prevent Mrs. Growell from receiving the mortal blow.

“It was entirely contrary to Mr. Growell’s intention, that one of his men, inspired by the most laudable zeal, conducted to Sumptuous Castle the proper officers of justice. The arresting of Evan could not but be fatal to him; he felt it, and would have preferred the sacrifice of half his fortune. As soon as he perceived the arrival of the important cavalcade, he gave himself up for lost, and trembled at the fruits of his imprudence. In the secret conversation which he held with Evan, the latter signified to him, that if a regular process were established

against him, and that he should be condemned to die, he would divulge every thing. John swore likewise that he would do the same. Mr. Growell, who already thought that he perceived the instruments of torture, said to his two accomplices, that they might employ towards the jailors every art of seduction and of bribery, and that he would instantly honour every promise they might make. As they were all three perfectly convinced that nothing resists gold, where there is much of it to be gained, they became a little easier on that head.

“The arrival, as sudden as unexpected, of Lord Milborn, of his daughter, and of Mr. Grimsby, every one of whom Mr. Growell believed, and hoped to be dead, plunged him into a state of the most terrifying alarm. How, thought

he, would it be possible for him to escape such a variety of accusations, which seemed ready to come against him? On this he was deeply ruminating, at the time when, to all appearance, he was listening with the deepest attention and interest to the recitals respecting his supposed friend. His mind, fertile in execrable projects, presented him with the idea of one, which smiled in his infamous heart. If he succeeded, and he did not entertain a doubt of it, he would be for ever delivered from beings whom he abhorred, and every danger would disappear; it was that of postponing Lord Milborn's and his family's departure until the following day. He then sent for my father, and went to meet him in the avenue. 'There,' said he, 'are five thousand pounds; go instantly to Hawfield;

give them to the new turnkey, and tell him it is to favour the flight of Evan and of John; there is not in the whole world a single turnkey of a prison who would resist such a sum; tell the prisoners to come here, as soon as they recover their liberty, and stay yourself with Tom in the environs of the castle, expecting their arrival.' He then detailed the plan that he had formed, for the assassination of Lord and Lady Milborn, Miss Harriot, and Captain Grimsby, whilst crossing the heath, as their reappearance would necessarily, he said, draw down ruin upon him. He likewise delivered to my father bank-notes for a thousand pounds, to be divided among four, and reiterated the promise he had made, to put him, within eight and forty hours, in possession of the estate in Wales.—'Furnish

yourself,' added he, 'with arms, particularly with guns and pistols, for you know that Evan and John will be destitute of both. As soon as the business is done, every one of you retire into the subterraneous chamber in Mrs. Dispark's house. You will be safe there, and I shall see you the following night!'—My father was surprised that Mr. Growell did not reproach him, either with having preserved Captain Grimsby's life, or with having suffered, through his carelessness, Lord Milborn and his daughter to escape; but he felt that the occasion he had for him diminished, and indeed annulled every blameable action of which he could be guilty.

“ My father returned home, mounted his horse, and, with Tom, repaired to Hawfield, where they found Nancy.

As soon as she was apprised of Evan's being taken, she flew to his prison, where she informed him of the subterfuges that she had employed to secure to him a happy and a brilliant fortune. 'Without,' said he, 'this damnable exchange, I should not be here; it is yourself, odious woman! who are the executioner of your son.' — Nancy wept, and acknowledged that he was in the right.

“John did not, however, waste his time in useless conversation. As soon as they were lodged in the jail, he asked to speak with the turnkey, and, without preamble, proposed to him to set whatever price he chose upon his companion's liberty and his own. The turnkey shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and replied, 'three thousand pounds! — 'You shall receive them, my friend,'

he said, 'before midnight; I will write a few lines, which you must send off by some trusty person, and the sum you demand shall be remitted you.' The turnkey showed signs of astonishment and even of incredulity.—'You do not, I perceive,' said John, 'think that I am in a situation to fulfil my promise.'—'You are in the right,' replied the turnkey.—'Well,' continued John, 'but what can you risk? Evan and myself are still your prisoners, and the door of liberty will not be opened until you receive your money.'—'I consent,' replied the turnkey. He brought what was necessary for writing, but observed that he could not send the letter before night.

"John returned to Evan, whose mother was still with him.—'We are saved,' said he, and he told them of

every thing that he had settled with the turnkey. At that moment one of the door-keepers introduced my father. He was the bearer of five thousand pounds. John's letter to Mr. Growell was become, therefore, needless. The turnkey was called, the three thousand were counted out to him, and he gave his word that he would come for the prisoners at midnight, and himself conduct them out of, and at some distance from, the prison.

“ My sister was at night compelled to retire. She took a post-chaise, and came to my house, to inform me that my father, Tom, Evan, and John would come before noon, and conceal themselves in the subterraneous chamber in my house. She gave me an account of all that I have just mentioned to you. My hair stood on end while I listened

to her, and I resolved, at the same moment, to undermine the abominable plot. The presence of Nancy putting an obstacle to all that I projected, in order to save so many innocent victims, I persuaded her that it would be more prudent in her to return home, to give an answer, in case any inquiries should be made after our father.—‘ You can,’ said I, ‘ return, during the night, without running any danger.’—She followed my advice, and I saw her depart with sincere satisfaction. I then put on some of John’s clothes, and went to find Gideon and Alfred; they have informed you of every thing that passed from the moment of my entrance into their chamber.”

Here ended the terrible recital given by the nurse. It fully explained, to Lord Milborn and to his family, every

thing that had appeared incredible in the number of misfortunes which had assailed them for more than four years. The atrocity of the Growells inspired them with a horror that was stamped visibly on their countenances. Gideon and Alfred felt that every idea of filial love was extinguished in their hearts. To have retained any show of affection for such parents, would have been almost to participate in their crimes.

Notwithstanding all the execration that Lord Milborn felt against the monster, Growell, he wished, from a motive of consideration for his four children, whom he loved as though they were his own, to avoid giving any information against him.—“Your precaution will avail nothing,” said Captain Grimsby. “Evan, the savage Evan, together with his infamous companion,

John, will turn out, be assured, the accusers of Growell."

While they were deliberating on the subject, a servant came to inform Lord Milborn that a strong party of guards insisted upon the door being opened. It was past one o'clock in the morning, and there was no possibility of prevarication. The servants conducted the escort into the apartment wherein Mrs. Growell was laid out. Her husband, strongly bound, roared out horrible blasphemies on perceiving the guards. Their leader inquired for Lord Milborn, and told him that he was come to seize his person. Lord Milborn came immediately, followed by his family.—“ Lord Milborn,” said Captain Grimsby, “ has been condemned for having murdered me: I stand ready to clear him of that

accusation, as false as it is detestable."

"That is not *my* business," replied the man of justice; "I only fulfil my duty in taking him whom I am ordered to apprehend."

"In that case," said Captain Grimsby, "we will all go together."

The proposal was accepted. Orders were given for Mr. Growell's two carriages, which were then at Pervious House, to be got in readiness, and the horses saddled, when, at the same moment, terrible screams were heard. One of the guards opened the door, to know from whence they proceeded, but shut it again instantly. Volumes of smoke had nearly smothered him.—"The house," said he, "is on fire, and the flames seem to have reached the staircase. How shall we escape?"

Lady Milborn, preserving all her tranquillity, opened a closet; every one followed her, she ran to the back-stairs; nothing opposed her passage, and she arrived safe in the court, without experiencing the slightest danger. Nothing remained in the room but the corpse of Mrs. Growell, and her husband, who, strongly bound to the sopha, filled the house with his cries, which did not seem materially to affect any one who heard them.

The escort, conducted to Lord Milborn's presence, had left at the great gates three guards, who had first perceived the fire, and who had, by their calling out, first given the alarm. One of those men, observing a woman endeavouring to make her escape, ran after, and stopped her. As soon as the officer who commanded them came

into the court, he led her to him.—
“It is,” said the nurse, “my unfortunate sister; it is Nancy.”—As she held a small basket in her hand, they judged it advisable to explore the contents.—
“You will find nothing in it,” said she with audacity, “but combustible matters; a part of them has already answered my purpose, in firing one side of the house; I was going to the other, to complete the work I had begun, when this man laid hold of me.”

“Wretch!” exclaimed the officer, “who commanded you to commit this horrible deed?”

“Mr. Growell,” said she, “on one part, and my own revenge on the other. The former wished that all the inhabitants of Pervious House should be reduced to ashes. The traitor little thought that, in giving me the order,

himself would be one of the victims. But I, who have followed up all his intentions and proceedings, and who knew that he was still here, as well as his wife, felt a tenfold pleasure in reflecting that the author of all our calamities, the man who had made of my whole family a nest of murderers, should perish with those whose destruction he desired. One of my sons died this morning by the hands of his brother; my father will soon meet the fate of that dear Evan whom I love more than life; what remains for me to hope in a world which I have terrified by my crimes? Lucy, you have been the least guilty; you may still look forward to hope;—but for me—this is the way that I terminate my hellish existence!”—She then drew

from her pocket a large knife, which she ran deep into her heart, and her pulse ceased for ever to beat.

CONCLUSION.

LORD MILBORN was clearly acquitted, and re-established in all his rights; and, what is still better, he was so in the hearts of all good people. He returned with his family, of which Mr. Growell's children now made a part, to Milborn-Hall. The immense fortune of the nabob had been three parts reduced since his return to England; the remainder was divided between Alfred, Gideon, Clara, and Aurea. Alfred and Harriot became united; they had

loved each other from infancy, but, believing themselves brother and sister, they had mistaken the nature of their attachment.

Gideon, too, became the happy husband of her whom he had so tenderly loved ever since their first meeting. Ancelina consented, without difficulty, to a marriage, which she had long secretly wished. Mr. Modbury, on his arrival at Sumptuous Castle, heard with astonishment and grief the recital of the crimes of which the parents of his Clara had been found guilty; but his tenderness was not, in any respect, weakened by them. Clara came with her child and Miss Wilson to Milborn-Hall. Lord and Lady Milborn received with every mark of affection the widow of their unfortu-

nate son, and loaded the little Godwin with caresses. Clara and Mr. Modbury were married on the same day with the other two couple.

Evan, his grandfather, and four of their accomplices, who lived in the vicinity of Sumptuous Castle, and whom they betrayed, were hung. The nurse was likewise taken, imprisoned, tried, and condemned; Lord Milborn procured her pardon, and settled upon her what was sufficient to make her comfortable the remainder of her days.

Miss Wilson did not separate from her friend Mrs. Modbury, who with her husband inhabited an estate belonging to him.

Captain Grimsby got the better of the love that Harriot had inspired, and

did not leave Milborn-Hall until he had seen all his friends happy. A year afterwards, he married the sister of his former lieutenant, Bradfort, and enjoyed every felicity of which his good heart and many amiable qualities were deserving.

Aurea, little calculated either by body or mind, to form an establishment, lived constantly with Lord and Lady Milborn, who loved, and treated her as their daughter.

Pervious House, which had been reduced to cinders, was rebuilt at the expence of Mr. Growell's successors. The bodies of the husband and wife were, without doubt, consumed, for they could never be discovered among the ruins.

Emery and Diana, those two faithful servants, who had given so many proofs of attachment to their unfortunate lady, received rewards in proportion to their fidelity.

Let us not forget the delicate and disinterested proceedings of the farmer Cecil and his family. Mr. and Mrs. Modbury made it a duty to visit them frequently, with Miss Wilson. These good people rejoiced in the happiness of that amiable couple, whom they had, ever since their first knowledge, so affectionately esteemed.

POSTSCRIPT.

ALTHOUGH it is dreadfully painful to know that there ever could exist two such persons as Mr. and Mrs. Growell, I feel it my duty to assure the Reader that I am only the Editor of the work he has been just perusing.

Twelve years since, when I was at Bath, one of my friends introduced to me the son of Mr. Modbury and of Clara Growell. That young man, at the solicitation of our mutual friend, was kind enough to favour me with every detail respecting the lives of his

ancestors. He permitted me, after I had made the request, to render them public, on condition that I should conceal the names of the two families. All the alteration that I have made, has been simply that of substituting others. All the atrocities of that odious couple, towards Lord Milborn, his lady, and their children, are exactly true.

THE END.

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